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SHOT SHOW 2015
BRITISH AIRSOFT SHOW PREVIEW
OPERATION CALORE

KIT

VIPER TACTICAL PACKS
ENERGIZER TACTICAL TORCHES

SKILLS AND DRILLS

TARGET
INDICATORS

LOADED OR UNLOADED

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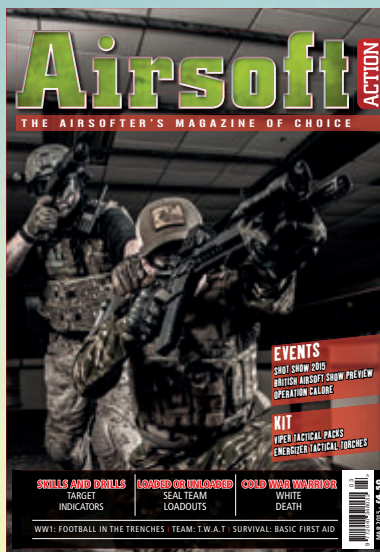
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IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR when many of the shows relevant to our wonderful sport all seem to come one after the other. As I write, SHOT 2015 is taking place over in Las Vegas and judging by some of the photos and videos posted on YouTube etc., there are some terrific bits of kit on display. The videos also prove that it is perfectly possible to shoot "proper" firearms in a safe, controlled environment - which we are not allowed to do in the UK unless you jump through a million hoops first!

AA Contributor, Scott Allan was covering SHOT for us and you can read his report starting on page 16. Up next is the British Airsoft Show at Stoneleigh Park in Warwickshire, from the 13th - 15th February. Over the past few years the Airsoft Show has grown from the humble beginnings of just one rifle range, to a full-on airsoft extravaganza which attracts thousands of visitors from across the UK and Europe. This year's show is a little different in that the central area is taken up by a display of WW2 vehicles. While I agree that this will be of interest to the majority of airsofters, I am not convinced that it should be made the "core" exhibit - although it will certainly attract a larger number of visitors to the area and that cannot be a bad thing. I think I'll reserve judgement until after the show when I write my review.

Then, just as things settle down again it's off to IWA 2015, in Nuremberg, which for me is probably the most important show of the three. Sure SHOT is bigger and BAS is all about the UK scene but IWA gives us a true perspective on what is likely to be happening in the world of airsoft over the next few years. The majority of Far-Eastern manufacturers are there and it gives us the chance to "peek behind the curtain" to see what's in store and, of course, I will share whatever is found when we get back.

There is loads going on at this year's British Airsoft Show so if you can make it, it will be great to see you and if you're there on the 13th, we have a very special guest with us who I promise you will want to come and meet - SAS hero Rusty Firmin; "the man with no gloves"!

I look forwards to seeing you there.

Nige

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AIRSOFT NEWS

WIN UP TO \$15,000 IN G&G COMPETITION!

Calling all Airsoft Graphic Designers and Artists.... How do you fancy winning up to \$15,000??

G&G are holding an international competition for the design of three Corporate Mascots and the prize is \$5,000 for the winner in each category.

The competition was originally intended to end on 31st December but the level of submissions has not been high enough, so G&G have extended the deadline to 9th September and asked Airsoft Action to spread the word.

So if you have a talent for drawing and fancy winning yourself a tasty prize, head on over to: <http://www.guay2.com/mdc/index.html> for more details - and good luck!



HOT NEWS!

RedWolf have just announced AIRSOFT SHOWCASE 2015!!

We all know there are loads of airsoft shops and site operators out there and wouldn't it be uber-cool if there was just one place we could go to see them? A place that was full of nothing but airsoft retailers, where we could browse from store to store, just like we do in shopping centres all over the country?

Wouldn't it be awesome if there was an "Airsoft Shopping Mall"?

Well that, my friends, is EXACTLY what Airsoft Showcase 2015 is!

RedWolf Airsoft have hired THE MALL in Reading and will be (quite literally) opening the doors on a whole new level of airsoft retail experience. If you've played at The Mall you will know what an amazing site it is (and if you haven't, grab a copy of last December's issue of Airsoft Action and read Les Lee's review) - so imagine what it will be like with all the shops full of the latest airsoft goodness!

But it's not just loads of shops and site operators - how about the chance to play a brand new, never-been-played-before site at the same time?

Coinciding with Airsoft Showcase 2015, ZED Adventures will be opening "Annex" and running a walk-on game throughout the day.

"Annex" is a new site situated right next door to the award-winning Zed Adventures "The Mall" in Reading and is ran by the same team.

This is a CQB site that consists of a very large 5-level office block, with multiple stairwells and an extremely varied layout. Games will be run through the entire day of the Showcase and players are welcome to book time slots of an hour in which to play.

Walk on slots will be available throughout the day but will be limited to ensure good game balance. The slots will be on a first come, first served basis so players may have to queue for a short period to get a slot at busy times. A test range and chrono area will be available for those who want to have a play with any new toys while they wait.

The price per player is £10 for a one hour slot.

More information and booking system will be live nearer the time of the event at www.zedadventures.co.uk

So stick this date in your diary now: 17th MAY 2015



Advance tickets for the Airsoft Showcase will be available shortly through RedWolf UK website at www.uk.redwolfairsoft.com

For Airsoft Retailers, Site Operators and players interested in booking a Stand at the show please contact chris.kong@redwolfairsoft.com

Entrance Ticket cost:

14 years old £5

15 years old - Adult £8

ALL WALES AIRSOFT EVENT

The All Wales Airsoft Event take place on Sunday July 26th.

The event, to be held at "Tuff Terrains" in mid Wales near Llandrindod Wells, is centrally situated to make it easier for teams to attend and will include various games throughout the day, with "Last Team Standing" for the end of day game.

The site is roughly 200 acres, with varied terrain and various bunker systems and with a well-equipped barn offering a briefing room, reception area and kitchen.

Tickets cost just £28.00 and include the game fee, optional overnight camping and entry to a prize Draw for a pistol donated by a sponsor.

Tickets are available to purchase online at: www.midwalesairsoft.co.uk and *Airsoft Action* will be covering the event.

For more information, contact Trish: trisha.reynolds@btinternet.com



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ROGUE'S GALLERY



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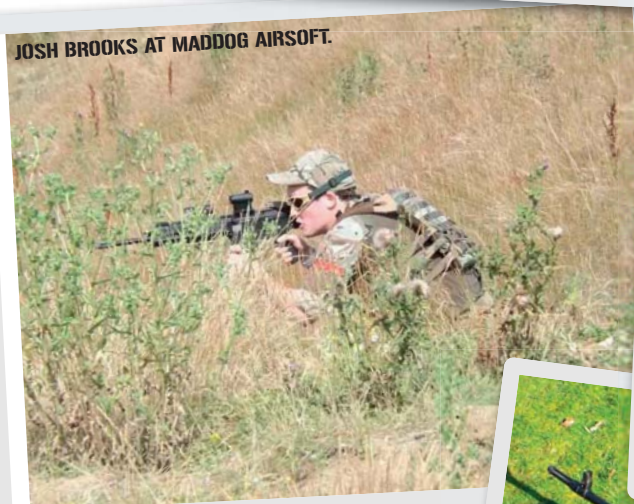
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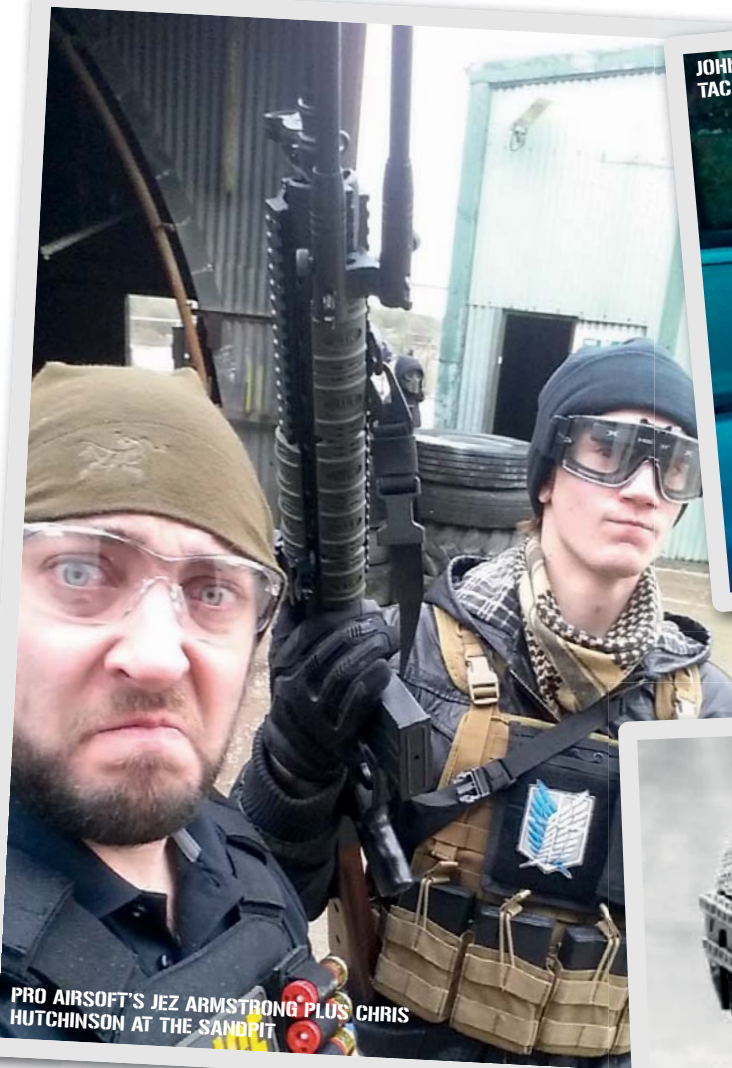
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GOTTA TANK? GET AN AK!

THE AKSU WAS MADE FOR SOVIET TANK CREWS, SO HOW DOES THE AIRSOFT VERSION MEASURE UP? GADGE HARVEY TAKES CYBERGUN'S ENTRY LEVEL OFFERING FOR A WORK OUT.

THIS MONTH I DECIDED THAT MY VENERABLE 10 year old Tokyo Marui AK47 could do with a rest and I'd treat myself to a new AK. Fancying a new AK74 (for a bit more of a modern look) I rang up the guys at JD Airsoft and asked if they had any in stock... They hadn't but they did have the AKSU version for tank crews. Well I'm easily convinced so it was in the car and off to Cannock to buy a new "Sunday Cannon".

SPECIAL OPERATIONS CARBINE

The real world AKSU is a short carbine variant of the modernised AK, the AK74 and was introduced to Soviet armouries in the 1970s – oddly enough in 1974! The short stocked "little bitch" (as the Russians nicknamed it) was originally intended for use by Special Forces, Airborne Troopers and of course, Tank Crews... all of whom required a short, compact, submachine-gun sized, small arm. While the Spetsnaz (in all their many guises) and VDV (paratroopers) found the weapon lacking where they needed it, it remained a constant feature with armoured units and, somewhat worryingly, Police units.

The problem with the real steel version is that its compact barrel, married to a full size AK74 5.45mm assault rifle receiver, meant that accuracy suffered somewhat as the high velocity round had little rifling to impart stability on it. Not the most desirable "spec ops" feature and you can see why GRU Spetsnaz and the airborne decided to stick with folding stock AK74s instead.

But for tank crews it was a godsend. Small, relatively lightweight (just under 3kg unloaded) and packing a punch, it was an effective personal self-defence weapon that went into service during the occupation of Afghanistan and it is still going strong today. These days you can also see it slung over the shoulder of Moscow police units, which is not only a little "threatening" but also a bit worrying when you think about battlefield rifle rounds being used in crowded civilian areas!

LICENSED KALASHNIKOV PRODUCT...

NO REALLY!

But how does Cybergun's "budget" entry AKSU hold up in the hands of a lifelong Tokyo Marui user?

Well, the answer is surprisingly well! Cybergun's "AKS 74 U" (it seems to be almost optional how the real ones are labelled... AKR, AKSU, AK74SU, AKS74U... it's all the same thing) is a licensed copy with Kalashnikov trademarks upon it (and, somewhat incongruously, a picture of old Mikhail Kalashnikov himself on the side) and comes in a "Starter Set" box that gives you everything you need to get going out the box - except BBs. The box also lets you know that this is the "60th Anniversary Edition" of the AKSU (although I'm sure they mean 60 years of the AK series, as the 60th anniversary of the AKSU being made would not be for another 20 or 30 years). To hammer it home, Cybergun mention it's an "official licensed product" no less than eight times on the box!



"Every time you pull the trigger for a single shot or fire a burst of auto you can really feel the AEG "move" in your hands, it's almost like an unintentional recoil feature and while it's only a slight springy vibration, it's oddly pleasing and makes it feel a bit more real."

Opening up the box I was pleased to see the usual "two pin" type charger, a stick battery, an adjustment "key", some surprisingly well written instructions and, most pleasing of all, not one but TWO high-cap magazines. These days a lot of entry guns come with a high capacity mag and to find one with two in was rather nice – a far cry from the days when my first TM AKs came with a 70 round mid-cap and buying enough mags to skirmish with was yet more expense. In fact the only thing that didn't come with this AEG which I'm used to seeing in a starter box, is a cleaning rod and an almost pointless "mini bag" of about 100 bbs.

So, while waiting for the battery to charge up I had a "touchy feely" of the AEG. It's not the prettiest of AEGs but then I've handled real AKs and they look a hell of a lot worse. It's damn solid and with an all metal and wood construction actually quite heavy for the "SMG" role it fills within airsoft (almost spookily just under 3kg unloaded like the real one) and a sling is a definite aftermarket purchase in my opinion (I fitted one on mine straight away).

All the moving parts seemed solid enough, the fire selector, with its charmingly Soviet settings of "safe, give it loads, single shot if I must", was accurate and firm and doubles up as a fake dustcover and charging lever. Pulling back the cocking handle gives you access to the hop up (oddly called a BAXS shooting system by Cybergun, probably a copyright issue), which is of the conventional "sliding bar" type found on many AK AEGs. While normally these are quite solid I do have to say that this didn't look the sturdiest of hop units I've seen but time will tell.

As with most AKSU (well the ones done properly) the top cover, which would hold the real carbine's spring, hinges up to house a stick battery. As an AK47 user who has lost more than one top cover in the heat of a firefight, it's great to see it firmly attached to the gun with some rudimentary iron sights affixed atop with two settings you're never going to need to change... seriously 300 and 500 metres?? Keep it on 300 and keep dreaming...

For those of you wanting "optics overkill" the left hand side of the receiver sports a traditional Kalashnikov side rail mount but remember,

anything fixed here is going to stop your stock from folding; and on the subject of folding stocks... that's done pretty well too. Most AEGs suffer from the manufacturer using very poor quality metal and "extending" any sliding stock is usually an invitation to have it snap off if you put the slightest pressure on it. Not so with Cybergun's offering. It is robust, has a firm release catch and an equally firm locking latch, although to be honest I can't see me needing a stock much on an AEG bought for urban and CQB games, so I think I'll be playing safe and keeping mine fixed folded.

Anyway, eventually the battery charged (it took a while to get that "warm" feeling a happily charged battery gets) and I fitted the 8.4 volt 1100 MA NIMH battery into its housing. I was well chuffed to see that there was plenty of room to fit slightly longer batteries than the ones supplied, which makes a change from having to wedge batteries into microscopic compartments. Now it was time to get shooting.

BLISTERING FPS

Here's where I was slightly worried. The boxes "blurb" boasted a blistering 495 FPS using .12 BBs (who on earth uses .12 BBs anyway?) and fairly toasty 384 FPS using a more standard .20 BB, the sort you'd be expected to chrono with at most UK sites. At around 380 you're not going to be using this at many, given that 350 seems to be the UK standard for CQB and 375 for more rural games with 400 FPS allowed if you're locked to semi shot only. If you're seriously intending to skirmish this AKSU an in-store downgrade before taking it home could be a good investment. Clearly Cybergun have pitched this starter set at the US market, where site limits of 500FPS are quite common.

I decided to test the AKSU out with one mag full of Blaster .20s and one mag full of Blaster .25s and here's where disaster struck. At this point my chrono decided to give me crazy



readings and then give up the ghost... all a bit academic though when we've established you're going to be running a "hot" gun with standard ammo out the box. Still, in the interests of "science" I decided to try the "soda can test" and fired a single shot of both weights into the base of a soft "energy drink" can. Neither penetrated the can but almost did and both left sizable dents in it, leading me to believe that the velocity stated on the box was probably about right. So I'm afraid we'll have to go with the manufacturers stated FPS for the moment and move on to its actual firing performance.

Putting in the .20 filled mag, I wound it up and fired off a few shots. Feed was fine, hop seemed to be nicely set for .20 out of the box and grouping was pleasing from a "carbine" aeg. Setting the AKSU to automatic was even more pleasing as the rate of fire from it (with the supplied battery) was not "blistering" but enough to hold its own in a firefight. After a good blast it was time wind on the mag, which I managed overwind it by one click and found it stopped feeding at all. Nothing a good slap to the side of the mag wouldn't fix but the overall build of the mags is, in my opinion, the weakest part of this package - but hey, that's probably why you get two of them! The good news is the magwell is compatible with Tokyo Marui, Classic Army and STAR AK magazines - and I'm sure many more but that's all I had to test with. Even the weak "out the box" magazines fit securely and the mag locking mechanism is well built and was slick with all four brands that I used for testing the AEG.

Now I've said a few times that this beast looks and feels like a real AK, it even fires a bit like one too. However, being used to the super slick internals of TM AEGs, I can't decide if the following "feature" is a good thing or a bad thing...

Every time you pull the trigger for a single shot or fire a burst of auto you can really feel the AEG "move" in your hands, it's almost like an unintentional recoil feature and while it's only a slight springy vibration, it's oddly pleasing and makes it feel a bit more real. I might find out

after a month of use that this "cool feature" is the AEG shaking itself to bits but again, only time will tell! With the box proclaiming "steel gears" in the gear box I'm less worried about tearing the teeth off the cogs than I would be with other budget guns with plastic gears.

EXCELLENT STARTER PACKAGE

If truth be told, for £200 this is a cracker of a starter package. If you're able to use it with its fairly high FPS, or are able to get your local store to downgrade it slightly, it's a fantastically versatile AEG. Classic-lined, Soviet chic designed for Spec Ops and CQB but capable of holding its own in a woodland firefight. Everything you need to get started is there in the box, although it's always a good idea to invest in quality batteries and chargers as soon as you can. The only flaw I could really criticise is the slightly flimsy magazines (but trust me, the real steel ones are pretty crap too) and the slightly high overall weight (but again, the real ones are no fluffy pillows), which offsets the fact that otherwise this compact assault carbine could be ideal for the younger player, or those of a short stature... Of course, if you're short but built like

a bull you've got no worries!

Lastly, as with all AK series weapons, the distinctive flash suppressor should unscrew to allow you to fit an aftermarket tracer or silencer unit... I say "should" as I depressed the locking nub and gave mine a good twist but it wasn't going anywhere! Not actually having a silencer or tracer to fit anyway, I decided not to risk stripping the thread or tearing the flash hider clean off and left it as it was... Simple, classic and ugly - and sure yours will slide off first time!

Overall I'd rate this as an extremely solid "workhorse" AEG, just like its real steel counterpart. It's a classic addition to a Soviet or insurgent loadout look and AKSUs are not that commonplace on the skirmish field, meaning you're more likely to stand out against the hordes of M4s.

If I was pushed (as we don't "award" stars in **Airsoft Action**) I'd rate this as a four out of five package, only failing to hit a five for the price because you're probably going to need a minor downgrade to be able to safely use it at most sites. I was just too impatient to get mine home to ask the guys at JD Airsoft to have a look at it and I also thought that surely it couldn't really

be doing 1.4 joules out the box?

So if you're looking for an entry-level gun, don't mind having a small downgrade done before taking it to more stringent sites and can handle the "real steel" weight of this Soviet steamroller, the Cybergun AKSU74 is probably worth a punt!



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IT'S A TOUGH JOB BUT SOMEONE HAD TO DO IT, SO SCOTT FROM AIRSOFT ACTION HEADED OFF TO SIN CITY TO CHECK OUT THE LARGEST GUN SHOW IN THE WORLD.

Over 64,000 people visit the SHOT Show each year, which is aimed at the trades who specialise in hunting anything that walks, crawls or flies - and everything in between! From Crossbows to Tasers and every conceivable firearm in between, the show is a truly eye-opening experience and I often found myself in awe (and occasionally a little shocked).

The trade of firearms and the associated gear is obviously colossal in the land of freedom and super-sized food. With hundreds of exhibitors there is a hugely diverse market on show and airsoft is only a very small part - but definitely growing.

So where does Airsoft fit into all of this?

Clearly Airsoft is very much the "poor cousin" at the Shot Show, so poor that often they didn't even know they existed. This became clear when I met Rudy Reyes, ex-Marine Recon and an actor from the hit TV show "Generation Kill". He's definitely a very unique soldier on many levels and an intelligent man. He only found out about airsoft last year and couldn't work out why people played. Over the course of a year he's learned more and thinks from a gaming point of view it's great - but as a tactical training tool it is even better! This, coupled with firearms celebrities such as Chris Costa having even more ties with airsoft, only raises the bar and perception of our market.

Now that there is growing recognition from many real firearms manufacturers that the Airsoft market does show potential, it's only going to get better. Of course by "potential" what I actually mean is greenbacks... money... moolah... dosh! Yes that is right, the right to bear arms is also a great opportunity to make a lot of money in a capitalist land of the free. Like any pastime, from golf to building model aircraft, the more money you spend the more desirable product you will get. Spend a little and you will get a product that is largely available but if you spend a large sum of money, you will get a better quality

(and often artificially priced) product. So walk along to the huge specialist firearms manufacturers and you will see high-end prices being endorsed by big names such as ex Magpul stars Chris Costa and Travis Haley. I'm not saying that all this is a bad thing, or that the products are bad but it is the reality of big business these days. Names, advertising and marketing are the driving force that each of the big manufacturers use daily to punt their products in every walk of life these days.

The SHOT Show allows all the different walks of life within the shooting/hunting trade to pour into one great big melting pot and cross-connect. This is why it is a great thing for Airsoft as a sport. Thankfully this year's show was a marked improvement over last year; the quality of the Airsoft stands was higher and they were larger.

Many big names such as Colt, Samson, H&K, Mega Arms and (until recently) Magpul take large sums of cash from Airsoft companies to use their names and you can understand why. Airsoft really does ride on the coat tails of the greatness that events like the SHOT Show have created. The civilian shooting market in the US is truly gargantuan, well over 300 million weapons are in the general public domain, it is believed. This means that the industry is worth hundreds of millions of dollars and Airsoft is another string to their bow... or coin in their purse. Even when we were there, DyTac signed a deal to make Airsoft Hex Mags which will be available later this year.

So why bother with Airsoft?

Well, a nice clear example is the UK.

"ASG SHOWED OFF THE CZ805 BREN WHICH WILL COME IN A PRO AND SPORT LINE VERSION. AGAIN LIKE THE EVO IT HAS BEEN WORKED FROM THE ORIGINAL BLUEPRINTS."



We can't own many firearms due to our draconian laws, which dictate that individual police firearms officers have the right to deny anyone they see fit from having firearms if they do not think they need them. Which means the chances of ever having shooting like a Magpul Dynamic training course is high on impossible.

Airsoft is our easy alternative to shooting and by rights we pay for the privilege in license fees to the real steel manufacturers, the same way we pay for it in our Nike trainers to have the latest successful athlete tell us we need the newest and greatest offering they have. Even though the chances are that the last pair of trainers you had were just fine!

For me the alternative Airsoft is what the likes of G&G in Taiwan do. They make their own self-designed rifles which bear a resemblance to some real firearms, without being so close that they have to pay a licence fee. This keeps the cost down for the end user and means they can produce new designs even faster.

So we have the choice that the manufacturers offer to us. The SHOT Show is the mixing bowl where the ideas are born, deals are made, impressions are given and new products are launched. Sometimes they do well, other things you see nose dive.

So what was the low down this year?

It was a relief to see G&G, Krytac, PTS and Nuprol there showing the good side of Airsoft. The stands were nice and professional-looking, although still far off what IWA in Germany has and this boils down to cost. The SHOT Show is fantastically expensive due to tied up union contracts that means you need three men to change a light bulb... "That'll be \$500 please." I am not joking!



Umarex

Speaking with Umarex, who distribute all of the H&K branded Airsoft rifles was quite positive. Oliver Lux has said they are hoping that production will continue to increase at the factories in Taiwan, although to date it has been quite hit and miss with what we see available. There are also plans to release a G28 rifle which should be very impressive. Sadly because H&K haven't made many new weapons, we won't be seeing new models except the G28. Umarex also have the IMI license which means things like their Sport Line Tavors will become more available over the next year.

Guay Guay (G&G)

The G&G stand at SHOT Show in 2014 was a huge let down compared to their IWA effort, a largely interactive floor showing off a great number of products past, present and future. This year the stand was bigger and showed off a few new interesting products. A reworking of the Combat Machine range which makes them look more cutting edge and new low cost models that look like the War Sport rifle with the Wire Cutter front rail.

The usual releases were also on show and during my talks with them they let slip the gearbox will be going through an overhaul, so that the Gen 3 MOSFETs will soon be inside the gearbox. This will be good news for all those who suffered with a lack of space. Their high-speed set ups will be released very soon now that the reliability has been increased, so the new Lightning Hawk will sport dual sector gears and just over 300 fps. All in all there was nothing earth shattering, no sign of the MG42 that was on display the year before and the GSS (VSS) was on display with all the same issues as previous. I do love G&G but they just seem to make amazing gear, then slightly stray off to do something bizarre that isn't so good. What I wish G&G would do is something more along the lines of Krytac; a LMG/Shrike/M249 that's a bit jazzy. It isn't overly complicated, it is functional for Airsoft and people would use it.

KWA

Distribution was the key area here, with the closure of the Defiance wing of KRISS Arms we lost KWA in Europe... again! There still isn't anything firm at the moment for stockists, other than importing from the Far East (or now the Far West), which doesn't help anyone in the UK.

KWA USA is able to provide stock to Europe but it may not be the most cost-effective path. Taiwan to US then back to Europe seems to be a long trip. On display was the illusive AK ERG rifle that has never appeared for the past few years. It looks and sounds like it will be great, if only they can work out all the kinks to release it. KWA had their own take on a Magpul PDR which, being only a prototype, is unlikely to be released this year. It was hiding in a glass case so we couldn't get too close a look at it. A new gas blow back AK was on display, which has certain Galil features such as the twin fire selector and grip. It looked nice but GBB AKs have never been overly popular in the UK unfortunately.

In short there were lots of cool ERG-type rifles but with no definitive release dates. All in all a little disappointing but at the same time fairly typical of the KWA brand. Quality over concrete information it seems.

PTS Syndicate

After the loss of the Magpul license, PTS were left with a bit of a hole to fill. In the last year they released the Mega Arms MKM gas blow back rifle. It is a stunning rifle and works very well and now there is talk of an electric version finally, albeit with no firm release date. How good will an ERG Mega Arms be? Well I'll be first in the queue that's for sure!

Also on show was a gas blow back Masada to be released later this year, this was a working sample and the finish was great. The Centurion Arms rifle range should be released this year too, to cover the standard M4 base for PTS. The very successful EPM magazine will be released in a gas format for the PTS/KWA range of gas rifles that is great news. The Enhanced Polymer range will be expanding too, new pistol grips, stocks and vertical grips are all on the cards. This means a quality product that isn't entirely different is filling the old Magpul gap comprehensively.

A clever front grip we saw was also capable of holding a Lipo battery to help with those front-wired rifles. That means you no longer have to use PEQ batteries if you don't want to. Amazing was the gas blow-back PDR, even the original Magpul designer came around to have a look as the concept never made it into real life.





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DyTac

I had a good meeting with DyTac who are keen to increase their market share within the UK. Good value M4 platforms are already available and DyTac have said they are looking to continue the improvement of the existing gearbox to be a stronger contender in terms of reliability and performance. The low cost rails and spares they produce are already a huge hit in the UK as good value alternatives to the likes of G&P and Madbull. New on the cards for them is the officially licensed Hex Mag, a funky polymer magazine that allows users to switch out coloured base plates for different uses. They should be hitting the shelves by the summer. DyTac could be a name to watch this year.

Action Sport Games

After the launch of the EVO (that felt like it was never going to arrive over the last few shows), ASG show no signs of slowing down. This year they showed off the CZ805 Bren which will come in a Pro and Sport Line version. Again like the EVO it has been worked from the original blueprints. It'll be a modular system that will take the regular magazine or a M4 magazine and has the ambidextrous fire selector, swappable cocking handle and fully adjustable stock. It is an unusual rifle but by no means is it ugly. The EVO was showing some new parts too, such as a cool replacement stock not dissimilar to the ACE stock. Hopefully because this is ASG's second rifle it'll be produced a little faster than the EVO.



Krytac

"Kraken Tactical" is the new venture from KRISS Arms, who make the Vector.

After the massive international "handbags at dawn" with KWA, KRISS decided to go it alone - and you can understand why. While the full facts were never truly known, you can appreciate the efforts they went to, to remain in the Airsoft market. There has been a "soft" launch in the US over the past 6 months, which is aimed at sorting out the teething issues with supply and designs. Allen from Krytac spoke to us and said he's very excited that these products will be into Europe in the next few months.

I really like what they've done with the rifle designs; basically instead of trying to copy what everyone else is doing they have made their own designs. Things like the Shrike/LMG, it isn't quite accurate to any real steel counterpart but then the Shrike is an old design. The modern twist on the design makes it look sleek and very cool. I think Krytac have got their fingers firmly on the pulse with what players want and this will definitely be the start of something big for them.

To make it even better they have the War Sport license for the LVOA .22LR rifle which, whilst isn't Airsoft is still very nice. On top of this I learned that while nothing is yet moving, the electric KRISS Vector has been given a green light! Well there is something to look forward too.





RedWolf USA

On display was the hand-built MG34, which we saw released in the UK last year and the usual items you can find on their website.

As well as these big names there were companies such as Evike, who retail in the US. Cybergun had their "standard" stand set up but unfortunately they didn't seem to have anything noteworthy that hasn't been on their stand for the past few years.

So what about kit?

Airsoft is all about the latest and greatest gear. I could attempt to cover every major manufacturer and fail, or give you a brief overview concentrating on the impression I got.

Kryptek is still the big kid on the block as you all know. Three years ago it was ATACs and before that it was always about Multicam. Kryptek did seem to have a large foothold around the show and during our meeting they seemed genuinely interested in the UK market and Airsoft in general. They had some interesting things as a show case, such as a bright blue Kryptek wet suit and lots of their really nice white Yeti-coloured gear.

The Magpul stand is always busy, maybe it's the Hot Shots girls or maybe it's the kit. They had their six shot drum shotguns on show again and the rest of their stand seemed the same as last year. They did have the new Jumpable Plate Carrier 2.0 and a new armour system with over the head shoulder armour. It all looked cool (as you would expect) but due to the delays and frustrations with the time it takes products to come to market, Crye are opting to show what they can do soon. Not a bad idea at all.



London Bridge Trading (or LBT) had their LBX range on display, which is also promoted by Chris Costa. There is nothing quite like adding a good name to your nice gear and LBX gear is designed with Airsofters in mind. When you don't need something to survive being blown up, why pay a crazy price for it? LBX provides the bridge between quality and affordability.

There are dozens of other stands I could've mentioned and all would be relevant in some way or another. Things from custom front rail by Unique AR, custom Rail Panel covers from Custom Gun Rails and short run pistol grips by Wicked Grips always raise a smile. Small companies producing really beautiful work.

All in all the show was enjoyable (as always). The Airsoft side was stronger than last year and the new releases were little more solid. I'm glad to see companies like PTS and Krytac expanding quickly as these are the big names what we've been lacking for so long.

Undoubtedly I missed something great but then when you are at a dizzying show such as this, it is very easy. As always **Airsoft Action** will have the up to date reports and the latest release reviews for the biggest brands around.

Next stop IWA in Germany!



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OPERATION CALORE RIVER

CHRIS WRAY WRITES FROM OPERATION CALORE RIVER, THE FOURTH GAME IN THE ONGOING 34th INFANTRY WW2 CAMPAIGN. Photos by Toby Lowndes

NOW IN ITS THIRD YEAR AND CARRYING ON from last year's "Fall of Avelino" game held at Stormforce Airsoft, the Allies have finally pushed through Avelino and are heading towards the town of Benevento. However, a large force of Germans have dug in along Calore river and have orders to hold the line. But what if the cold war had eventually gone hot? If Perestroika and Glasnost had not come to be – if hardliners in the Kremlin, the White House and Downing Street had gone to the wire and the massed battalions along the eastern borders of Europe had been given the go order?

Allied command has mustered a few units to hit these defenders fast and hopefully distract them so that the main army will be able to circumvent them. The task won't be easy with the Germans having superior numbers and time to dig in, booby trap and mine the area...

After a pretty bad week of rain and with forecast threats of snow, the game day arrived and we had sunshine but as it was still just above freezing, I changed from my normal unlined M41 jacket to a nice, lined, tankers jacket. This part of the story was held at Fireball Squadron in

Birmingham and encompassed parts of the National Paintball Fields which doubled the play area.

34th Infantry-run games are a little different to your regular skirmish and are a little more MilSim-like. They have ammo limits of 300 rounds per life for a standard soldier and 1000 rounds for support gunners. There is a two-bandage medic rule and they also operate a mission system where after an initial start-up mission, squad leaders choose which missions they do from a selection of twelve. These vary from secret intel gathering, supply and item recovery, to demolition and hunting the enemy, plus some which are a mixture. This way you never know what the enemy or the other squads are up to most of the time and means you need to be on your guard at all times.

The game had sold out with around 60 players attending and the sides were pretty even with three squads on both sides. I was in charge of one of the two American infantry squads and the third squad was made up of British. Even though it was a cold January morning, the safe zone was buzzing with everyone getting ready for the first WW2 game of the year and it was nice to see some new faces who were trying WW2 airsoft for the first time. After the safety and game brief the three allied squads moved





“WITH MY MORTAR AMMO EXPENDED, I CHARGED FORWARD WITH A MIX OF BRITISH AND AMERICANS. JUST AHEAD I SAW A FIZZING GRENADE WHICH I THOUGHT WAS STRANGE. ONE OF THE AMERICAN AIRBORNE IN FRONT HAD TRIPPED A GERMAN BOOBY TRAP...”



out to our HQ, which was a building in the corner of the site with a trench around it and two WW2 field gun props (which looked great).

Our first mission was to advance to a clearing where there was a German mine field, we had to clear at least 6 mines with bonus points for up to 9. We had an actual working WW2 mine detector to use for the task and the “mines” we had to detect were actually metal pie tins. The British first mission was to clear a minefield to the west of us using Bangalore torpedoes and a pyro charge and the other American squad had to prepare defences in the area of the HQ.

We set off to our mine field, stopping at the edge which was marked with German signs. 34th team mate Glynn entered the mine field with the mine detector. While he started his search for the mines, the rest of us took defensive positions as there were reports that there may be a German zug in the area. After a minute or so he detected something and Martin, his assistant, slowly dug up the first mine. Then we heard a large bang which we presumed was the British Bangalore, however we later found out it was Phil from one of the German zugs killing himself and others with a booby trap he was laying for us! We did hear a second large bang a short time later which was the British, just as we cleared our 6th mine. Then our intel proved correct and we took fire from a German zug but as soon as the sixth mine was up we were allowed to cross the mine field and moved to a building close by to take up defensive positions.

Just when I thought I had made the safety of cover I was shot, slumping down the side of the building in what I can only

describe (at least in my head) an epic war film death! As I lay there hoping for someone to come and apply a bandage another two of my squad fell to a German MG42. Another was picked off but it was not all one way, as we heard the death cries of three or four Germans. I was then bandaged and back in the game and soon after we were back to full strength, so I gave the order to withdraw as we had completed the mission. We were still under fire so we slowly moved back to our HQ to pick up new orders.

For the next mission we chose one that had us head into enemy territory to locate their supply base and blow up 3 stacks of fuel drums. We set off with a plan to skirt around the enemy to try to get to the location with no enemy contact. As we got closer to our objective we ran into the other American squad who were being pinned down to the sides of a road by 2 German zugs. We threw a few smoke grenades to provide cover and gave medical assistance to the couple of the squad wounded and went around the back of them to try and split the two zugs' fire. We had maybe





got 30 meters past them and it had worked, as I heard the "ting" off my helmet. As I lay on my back looking up at how pretty the trees looked as they swayed in the sunshine, half of the squad returned fire trying to pin down the Germans, while the other half tried to move around and start flanking them. It was slow progress but as I got bandaged I could see that we were starting to control the flank and as we pushed towards the Germans they pulled back towards their HQ.

We managed to get to the supply depot with no further contact and took up defensive positions around the first stack of fuel drums as we prepared the explosive charge (a fused pyro). After holding for 5 minutes we blew the charge and moved to the next stack and again held for 5 minutes before moving onto the final stack. This one was a bit different, as rather than a single bang pyro this was a firework that lasted for a whole minute and was used to try and simulate things blowing up. It was very cool but I had this vision of us all stood around watching this while getting bumped by the Germans. Thankfully it never happened and we set off back to HQ but as we got close we ran into a German zug who must have had a mission in the area. We traded shots but we were low on ammo, myself and another were completely out. Thankfully the British squad turned up and the Germans withdrew before they were overrun.



It was getting close to the lunch break so we chose a mission to retrieve a box containing intel documents that had been held at the local Police Station. We set off fast and as we would get a bonus if we managed to avoid enemy contact, we hoped to get in and out undetected. This went out the window before we were half way there as we got ambushed by a German Zug as we went through a very overgrown area. Although this wiped out half of the squad, we managed to drop some smoke and get ourselves bandaged up - and had our first friendly grenade kill as a grenade hit a tree and killed one of our own! After this we managed to punch through and get to our destination and hold for the required 10 minutes and retrieve the information. We then had to rush back to our HQ to make it in time. Thankfully we made it back with no further encounters, mission completed but without the bonus of no contact. On the bright side it was lunchtime and after a bit of banter and a couple of burgers, well ok 3 burgers, it was back out there.

We chose to do a supply run mission, which is the one mission which tends to be the same every time. We had to go into enemy-held territory and retrieve a box of supplies - and when I say

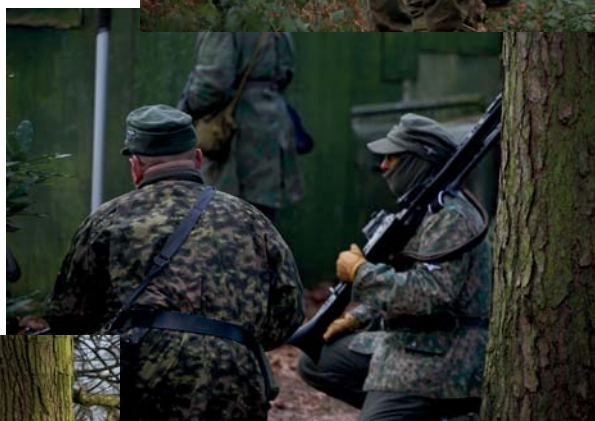




"supplies", I mean sweets/pop/crisps etc., so it is always a popular mission! Proof is in the pudding, as the other allied squads had chosen to do theirs now too. As the other squads headed west, we went towards the east flank hoping they would be a distraction and we would get an easy run. We were wrong! Twice we were bumped by different German zugs and our entire squad was wiped out. As we returned to our HQ to regen' we saw the British already devouring the contents of their supply box and the other American squad just coming back with theirs.

So we set back off. Our thinking was that if we went the same route as last time the Germans would have moved on, but once again we were wrong and encountered a German zug. After a short skirmish we did manage to break through and going just about the longest way around that we could, we made it to our supply box! Heading back, we took the most direct route and thankfully made it back to HQ for a quick breather and to devour some of the contents of the supply box. Never has a Hershey bar and root beer tasted so good! After so long taken on the one mission we had time for one more before our 3 squads grouped together for a final assault on the German camp. As we knew Gerry was in the area we chose a thinning out the enemy mission, which meant that we had to engage the enemy, get 5 confirmed kills and withdraw. Thankfully this did not take long as we got the drop on a German zug on a patrol and as soon as we got our 5th kill we headed back to HQ to bomb up and get supplies for the assault on the German base.

All we knew was that the Germans had dug in around a village and were heavily armed. We were to hit them head on, no time for any sneaky business. So with this in mind, my squad and the British took our light mortars. At the last game I killed 4 of my squad on the first shot, after putting the shell in the wrong way and having to tip it out, so I was determined to not make that mistake again. As the 3 squads moved towards the base we took heavy fire. I lined up the mortar and let the first pyro away. This flew high and straight and looked good - but then the wind caught it and took it over to the German flank where the other American squad was attacking. As the bang went off we heard the hits and recognised the voices. This turned out to be 4 of the 34th in the other American squad! Whoops! But at least I am consistent. I fired my remaining rounds, this time accounting for the wind and thankfully did not kill any more allies



and hopefully took out some Germans. The British also opened up with their mortar as we advanced further forward.

With my mortar ammo expended, I charged forward with a mix of British and Americans. Just ahead I saw a fizzing grenade which I thought was strange. One of the American airborne in front had tripped a German booby trap... Bang! Six of us dead! The Germans were holding steady and wave after wave of allied attack was repelled. One last valiant charge was made and a minute later there were just wounded allies strewn around. We had pushed the Germans back but had not managed to displace them and then it was all over... "Endex!"

We all headed back to the safe zone for some last banter and war stories as we packed away. I have to say I had a great day, with some good missions, some good encounters with the enemy and great fun with a good squad. We had failed to remove the German obstacle but had bought the time needed for the main army to bypass and move onto Benevento, which will be the 5th part of the campaign and a weekend event in August.

If anyone is interested in WW2 airsoft then check out the kit guides, forums and game events at www.ww2airsoft.org.uk. Lastly I would like to thank all the players for once again spotless game play and everyone at Fireball and the 34th for a great day!

Roll on the next instalment!



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KIT AND KABOODLE

ONCE AGAIN RICHARD BELL, AKA FIREBASE-ALPHA, DOES HIS REGULAR ROUNDUP OF KIT THAT HAS CAUGHT HIS EYE – AND ENDS WITH SOMETHING JUST A LITTLE BIT “SPECIAL” ...



Gear Dynamics

Gear Dynamics are a Canadian-based designer and manufacturer of tactical equipment that I have been following for some time. They supply a variety of off the shelf kit (belts, rigs and slings) but are able to do commissioned work, should you require something a little more bespoke. They also have a very extensive range of both camouflage patterns and solid colours for their kit (around 25 to choose from), so something for everyone. My recent purchase was two of their “Accelerator” slings with the QR (quick release) attachment, in Pencott Badlands for myself and Kryptek Highlander for a friend. These two-point weapon slings are very lightweight, easily fitted, simple to use and very effective. The QR attachment is an “add on” but well worth the cost and they are working on a padded version of the sling as we speak.

<http://www.geardynamics.ca>



Milspecmonkey

Now it may surprise a few of you who know me but I am not going to reference their worldwide recognised signature products (patches), instead I want to highlight their range of “hooded tops”.

I have been wearing MSM Hoodies for the past four years and I currently have all the models, which are: Polar1, Heavy ECONO and RAW (I have 2 of these). They are available in a variety of solid colours: OD, Charcoal, Tan and Black. Each one has a purpose, which is predominately based around the material used; from Polartec Thermal Pro material, through to 80% cotton/20% polyester blend fleece. They all have heavy duty Velcro panels on the left and right arms for patches and some come with extras, such as inside stash pockets or thumb holes in the cuffs (model specific). The one pictured is the “OD Heavy ECONO”, that was more than hardy enough for -2C in rural Scotland.

<http://milspecmonkey.com/store>



Haley Strategic Partners

OK, so this is a blatant teaser of HSP gear but trust me when I say the wait will be worth it!

In next month's issue of *Airsoft Action* we will bring you a UK Exclusive review of the Haley Strategic Partners D3CR-H (Heavy), which is the big brother of the D3CR that was released in 2013. We have them in both Coyote Brown and Multicam and as you can see, we are already getting to grips with them.

<http://www.haleystrategic.com/store/equipment.php>

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DOGTAG AIRSOFT

LES LEE REPORTS FROM HORSHAM, WHERE 250 ACRES OF WEST SUSSEX HAVE BEEN TURNED INTO A TRULY SPECTACULAR AIRSOFT SITE.

EVERY NOW AND AGAIN IN LIFE, you come across something that truly does supersede your expectations and Dogtag Airsoft, near Gatwick did that for me. So much so, that I was compelled to make a second visit because one day of action just didn't cut it. This place is massive! 250 acres, which make up the 16 fields of play, should fill the belly of any Airsoft high-roller.

Set your Satnavs for "RH12 4SE" and it will lead you to Holmbush Farm, Faygate where you will find a signposted hard top lane which will take you up to the Holmbush Paintball site - but don't turn in there. Continue along the lane deep into the forest and you will find yourself at Dogtag's hard -standing car

park area, which is well away from the paintball area. Grab your gear and twenty paces later you will find yourself in what is in my experience, the biggest, most user-friendly, covered and secure safe zone you could wish for, where you will be greeted by Ross Beare, the site owner.

Back in 1995 Ross acquired this huge piece of land, predominantly to build what turned out to be a very successful and highly acclaimed Paintball site. Following on from that success he incorporated archery, shooting, blindfolded 4x4 driving, low ropes, axe-throwing and Segways, which effectively catered for just about every venture and activity that outdoor enthusiasts and thrill seekers could wish for. Then, in 2013, together with his great friend Albert Finnigan, they decided that their own shared passion for Airsoft should be (and could be) incorporated into this already successful Paintball site. However, unlike many other good sites and wherever possible, they wanted to operate this in its own entity. After all, 250 acres is a seriously big piece of our planet and there was more than enough quality woodland to segregate Airsoft from Paintball, with the option to encroach if there was a need or desire.

Now that you have a rough idea of the sheer scale of this place, I will do my best to elaborate a little. Amongst the fifty plus buildings (yes, you heard me right - that doesn't include barriers, trenches, natural defences, etc.) I was super-impressed to see the actual build-quality of these structures. These are not some quickly



"IT IS INSPIRING TO SEE THAT SINCE ITS INDEPENDENCE 9 MONTHS AGO, THERE HAS BEEN A 200% INCREASE IN CLIENTS AND THAT ALONE IS INDICATIVE OF JUST HOW GOOD THIS PLACE IS."



nailed together "that'll do" features, with a little plasterboard and a coat of paint! We are talking holiday camp style log cabins and, from a health and safety perspective, will most probably stand up to a small nuclear detonation in the back yard.

Sorry, I'm getting boring now (but I just love the thought of nobody getting hurt during a fire fight), so let me tell you a little about the games themselves (which incidentally are always subject to a pre-game safety check for fallen trees and/or branches, slip trip or fall hazards, etc.). These include "Island Fortress", "Towers Field", "SAM Site", "Raise the Alarm", "Urban Raid", "Medipack Valley", "VX Gas", "Amazon", "Village Church", "Jungle" and the latest addition, "The Helicopter". From the titles it should give you an indication of the type of games to expect but Ross hasn't rested on his laurels by just naming games, every sortie has a "feature", an objective of some sort. To give you an example, by completing a mission on one of these, a missile is electronically launched across a valley which ultimately destroys the enemy base. I for one have never seen such realistic special effects at any site and it was quite overwhelming to see the thought, time, money and energy that has been invested to make Dogtag an industry leader - as well as a great place to spend a Sunday. Ross has also given me a heads-up about "Dark Fortress", a new game set for the very near future. Talking of investment and to give you another idea just how much has been installed and developed

to make Dogtag one of the best, about £30k has been ploughed back into the site in the last nine months alone and there is an ongoing development program in place to continually improve, replace and regenerate the valuable natural woodland, which itself is a place of sheer beauty.

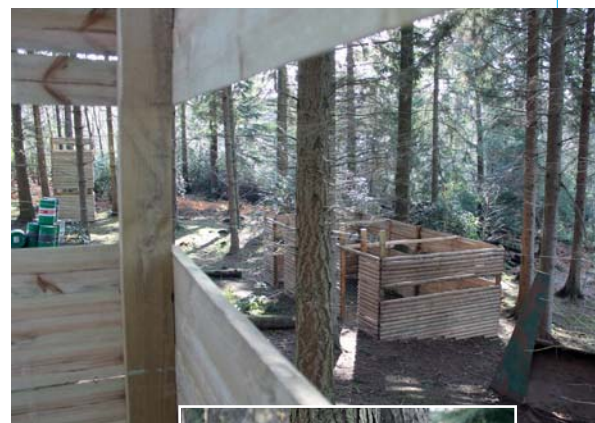
I must add that there are several different scenarios for every field, so it is unlikely that you would ever play the same game twice, unless demand was so great. Then Ross will ensure that you get exactly what you want, such is his determination that everyone leaves happy and having had

an exhilarating day. Even if you turn up having never played before and without kit, there are 50 complete sets of rental gear at your disposal and Tactical Quartermaster has an on-site shop where you can buy virtually anything. Of course, Dogtag is also UKARA registered and can process UKARA applications usually within 48 hours.

In the centrally-based safe zone, which is adjacent to the game areas (so no long hikes back), you can quickly return to "base" should the need arise. Should your gun malfunction, the resident gunsmith can either repair, or offer a free loan gun until yours is fixed (or for the remainder of the day, should the need arise). Of course there are battery charging and HPA charging facilities available, again all free of charge.

This isn't obvious when you are viewing through misty glasses, or mesh goggles up to your neck in flying BBs but I was fortunate to have my second visit on a non-game day, so was able to soak up what Mother Nature had provided. This is some of the most beautiful spruce forest and wilderness and part of Ross's remit is to best maintain the natural habitat therefore, as you will find, the majority of structures are resurrected fallen woodland wherever possible.

Marshals Keith Porter and Brendon Rudge join Ross every day, working at the site on basic maintenance and rebuilds, whereas Head Marshal Jason Frisby keeps focus on the smooth running of the day and the Marshal to Player ratio of 1 to 10 keeps order. All Marshals wear red uniforms and carry radios and those that are first aid and (equally importantly) fire-fighting trained are strategically placed throughout. Forest fire is sometimes overlooked issue at many sites, as during the heat of summer a stray spark can





easily turn dry bracken into an inferno in seconds.

Anyway, back to the stuff that you want to know, typically you will find 80 plus players turn up (on average) every other Sunday but that said, the numbers are increasing in line with investment and the £25 walk on fee includes lunch, free tea and coffee throughout the day and the resident photographer to take your photos FOR FREE - which I thought was a nice touch. Obviously snacks and cold

drinks are available to top up your energy levels from the on-site office/shop. Dogtag membership currently stands at around 130 regular members and that's just in the last nine months. Membership will cost you the grand sum of £10 which will include (when eligible) your UKARA registration, a DOGTAG AIRSOFT players patch, a 25% discount on pyro's and a minimum of two free Members Only games. Dogtag also works closely with

Crawley Surplus and Tactical

Quartermaster for all your gaming needs, including RIFs whereby any Airsoft gun is sold with a voucher for a full day's play at Dogtag Airsoft - which will entitle the buyer to initiate use of said weapon in a purpose-built site, thus enhancing responsible ownership and good practice.

It is inspiring to see that since its independence 9 months ago, there has been a 200% increase in clients and that alone is indicative of just how good this place is.

It is refreshing to see that "appropriate adults" are allowed to play, providing they are accompanied by someone aged 10 years plus... or something like that! So Dads and Sons, what are you waiting for? After all, this is the new and improved 21st century "Father and Son" day out - you don't have to go fishing anymore!

One point worth mentioning, is Dogtag Airsoft (Corporate Division) is available 7 days a week by prior arrangement for work, birthdays, hen, stag do's, etc., so it might be worth taking that snippet of info into work tomorrow and leave it on the boss's desk. After all, "Team Building" is high on most business agendas nowadays... and just imagine the bounty on the Boss's head

(wouldn't you just love to shoot your boss in the butt!) Dogtag is also available for private hire for team games or team training.

As always, I like to ask the site owner to have their say on how they see things because, as I always say, "nobody knows their site better than they do". When I asked Ross this question, with nothing short of passion and commitment, he replied:

"We were all taken aback by the politeness and gamesmanship of Airsofters. Jason Cole (aka Pugwash) had always said that he'd be delighted to run Airsoft events rather than Paintball, as the guys are so friendly and honest, which is a far cry from the Paintball events we run.

"We are all delighted that we decided to venture into Airsoft and have not looked backed since developing Dogtag Airsoft 9 months ago. We have learned a great deal from the advent of running Airsoft games and although we have made several mistakes along the way, we are proud to have listened to our customers and responded to their feedback to ensure that we are now able to offer

our customers (what we believe to be) the best Airsoft experience in the South East of England.

"We pride ourselves on our professionalism and client services. We believe that we have come a long way since the addition of Airsoft to our centre but we know that we still have a long journey ahead of us to make sure it turns into our goal... which is to be the ultimate Airsoft site in the UK. Without question we know that the people we need to thank more than anyone else are our loyal band of regulars, without whom none of this would have been possible and we strive to make sure that we return their supportive efforts by exploiting Holmbush's potential to its fullest".

Well after seeing what I had with my own eyes, that is a bit of an understatement, as Ross seems to be doing a damn fine job already! His determination to strive forward and continue to develop is nothing less than an inspiration.

Now I know that many of our younger players may want to stick their fingers down their throat when they simply hear the word "Paintball" but let's hold back a second and explore the simple word of "evolution".





"WE BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY SINCE THE ADDITION OF AIRSOFT TO OUR CENTRE BUT WE KNOW THAT WE STILL HAVE A LONG JOURNEY AHEAD OF US TO MAKE SURE IT TURNS INTO OUR GOAL... WHICH IS TO BE THE ULTIMATE AIRSOFT SITE IN THE UK."

Both myself and our beloved Editor Nige were 1st generation Paintballers. We both concur that we may not be where we are today had someone not invented the Paintball Gun, in particular the original Splatmaster ten round pistol. A simple CO2 powered lump of plastic, quite crude in its basic form and non-customisable because there simply wasn't the choice. Not even a single RIS rail to fix any form of sighting system – yes, it really was that basic, but boy did we have fun!

We had to develop skills to get a hit, such as stealth and cunning but there was nothing more rewarding than hearing that overwhelmingly satisfying "thwack" when you got a hit, from a very minimal distance. You would also usually hear a string of blasphemous words follow on, as these things hurt due to having to get so close to your target (as was the very nature of the game and equipment)! However, it wasn't all corporate/stag/hen/birthday groups in the early days and we did have choice, albeit limited, when it came to buying our own camo, boots, masks and other bits and bobs.

Then then came the day when the first semi auto rifles were available and of course the road to progression and development had begun. After a while teams found themselves in organised leagues and as one thing led to another, Paintball became a well-established and well-reputed sport in its own right and to this day is still enjoyed by many.

However, as I see it, Airsoft has a lot to thank Paintball for, not only in terms of the creation of a recognised and well established sport where it is acceptable to shoot other people but we have advanced and refined the "shooting others" part and turned it into our own remarkable sport. "Honour" is the sole reason that Airsoft is held in such high esteem, as it brings out this very important element in all of us and gives us that otherwise rare opportunity to display the honourable side to our very nature, something that is deemed to be lacking in today's Paintball.

And so, from the early 1980's and a humble plastic paint-firing pistol and a few acres of woodland, we can often find ourselves using converted (or at least amalgamated) sites to



shoot others with our technically advanced weaponry, increased firepower, various terrains and a never ending selection of kit and kaboodle. This, in my opinion, is where the sport of shooting others has evolved from and nobody that I know can give a better example of this than Dogtag Airsoft, where both sports not only run side by side but also gives the option of extra game zones adding to the choice, dictated by the players by way of numbers and/or desire.

Ross's philosophy is quite simple really, he gives the customer exactly what they want in the best and most comprehensive way possible, so it is no surprise that Dogtag Airsoft is going from strength to strength and I really do believe that his ultimate goal will be reached - and 2015 could be the year it happens.

Well it's time to wrap this one up and for me to conclude that Dogtag Airsoft is up there amongst the best, if not THE best that I have had the privilege to visit and review. Ross is passionate about all he does and Dogtag is the cherry on one very big and inviting cake. It is professional to the grass roots and above all else, I dare anyone to go and check it out and leave with nothing but a big cheesy grin and empty BB bottles because, apart from being one of the friendliest sites ever (and it's worth mentioning cliques and self-proclaimed elitists will not get their egos tickled here as everyone is as important as the next person), Ross's first and foremost objective is that every single person has the best Airsoft experience possible in the most friendly, fun and safe environment.

Les OUT!




VENUE: DOGTAG AIRSOFT

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01293 852131

www.holmbushpaintball.co.uk

A man, identified as Gareth "Gadge" Harvey, stands in a snowy field. He is wearing a full white winter camouflage suit, including a hood and gloves. He is holding an AK-47 rifle with both hands. The background consists of snow-covered ground and bare, frosty trees under a pale sky.

CONTINUING HIS COLD WAR
WARRIOR SERIES, GARETH
"GADGE" HARVEY TAKES
A LOOK AT 1960s SOVIET
INFANTRY IN WINTER
CAMOUFLAGE.

WHITE DEATH

WWII BROUGHT THE WORLD CLASSIC IMAGES of Soviet infantry clad in ghostlike white snowsuits leaping from their armoured vehicles, submachineguns blazing away as they fought the invaders – an image that would be almost as likely in any future World War Three!

Some twenty years later, superficially little had changed to the casual observer of the Russian army on winter manoeuvres from their 1940s ancestors. During WWII the Germans had called the Soviets in their excellent winter combat gear “white death”, as they invisibly and silently infiltrated Axis strongpoints. Fighting seemingly without effort while their Teutonic foes struggled to operate their equipment and survive the vicious Russian winter.

While most armies in the Cold War years maintained a small elite cadre of qualified mountain and alpine troops (notably the British Royal Marines, Italian Alpini and German Gebirgsjäger), the Russians, being used to crippling harsh winters, held entire divisions in a state of readiness for winter warfare. In the “Great Patriotic War” simple equipment, troops hardened to harsh climates and a high volume of automatic fire had proved devastating to the Germans, whose over-engineered weapons and vehicles froze solid and lack of winter kit and camouflage made them easy targets who often froze to death on sentry duty, even before the Soviet attacks.

ARMoured ASSAULT

This month’s cold war warrior represents a Soviet motor rifles soldier of the late 1960s, prepared for operations either in defence of one of the Motherland’s arctic regions, or perhaps about to engage NATO in a harsh Northern European winter environment. As aforementioned, superficially only his more modern rifle distinguishes him from his forefathers but there are subtle differences we shall look into in this article.

While WWII Soviet infantry rode into battle using the brave, but risky, *tankodesantniki* (Russian: tank riders) tactic due to a shortage of motor vehicles, by the mid-60s the Red Army was building up a formidable range of armoured personnel carriers and troops were also trained to use the century’s old art of skiing to silently enter the battle area. Necessity had seen early tankodesantniki ride atop T34 battle tanks, often fresh from the factory, into the battle area but pioneering wheeled APCs like the BTR40 (a four-wheeled armoured scout car loosely based on the US White scout car) and the 8-wheeled BTR60 open topped squad carrier, had turned the tactic of “tank riding” into a true form of mechanised warfare that was shockingly effective and borrowed much from the concepts of the German armoured half-track equipped “Panzergranadier” units of WWII.

Using the armoured hulls of the BTRs, the motor rifles soldiers would be protected from enemy artillery and harassing fire until within assault range of the enemy. Jumping out of the open-topped vehicles, a veritable hail of fire would be “walked” into the enemy as they squad advanced, firing on the move in a frontal attack. The sheer volume of fire coming from the squad’s AK47s and belt fed light machine guns. While this was in stark contrast to the NATO policy of accurate aimed shots, it was frighteningly reminiscent of the late WWII “shock platoons” of Red Army soldiers armed entirely with PPSH sub machine guns. While the chances of scoring a hit were minimal for the riflemen themselves, supporting accurate fire would be put down by the BTR’s crew and the squad’s snipers with their semi-automatic SVD sniper rifles (who would target enemy officers, machine gunners, radio operators and anti-tank crews to demoralise NATO and force their heads beneath the parapets of their trenches). In short, the volume of fire from a Soviet motor rifle battalion on the attack was nothing short of overwhelming, the theory being to “win the firefight” with the sheer volume of lead directed towards NATO lines. As Comrade Stalin accurately put it, “quantity had a quality all of its own”!

Our cold war warrior has dismounted from his APC and is advancing towards the NATO lines, unsure of where their camouflaged positions are and awaiting the squad’s APC to start to pour fire into likely hiding places.



“ONE THING YOU CAN BE SURE OF – IF YOU BUY RUSSIAN FIELD KIT, IT’S PROBABLY GOING TO LAST LONGER THAN YOU WILL!”



WINTER CAMOUFLAGE

Most noticeable of all (or perhaps least noticeable given its intended purpose) is his two piece, pure white snow suit. This late 1950s example is almost identical to its WWII predecessor and can sometimes be found in a one-piece variant. Both jacket and trousers are of a loose, baggy cut and feature cloth ties to adjust and tighten the garments, which can be manipulated with gloved hands. While the trousers feature just a waist band and ankle ties (the legs and ankles are baggy enough to be able to don the trousers without taking your boots off), the smock sports one or two nifty features. Firstly, the sleeves end in built-in three-finger gloves and have slash openings at the wrists should you need your hands free to handle equipment – a simple but effective way of making sure the hands are kept camouflaged by a pair of gloves that cannot be lost. Secondly, the neck and oversized hood (so a helmet can be comfortably worn under it) have several adjustable ties so that the exact fit of the hood can be altered to accommodate wearing either a soft hat, steel helmet or, as was often the case and can be seen in these photos... both!

Webbing is the standard post-war Soviet stalwart rubberised canvas belt and Y straps (often mistaken for brown leather), which securely hold a magazine pouch on the right hip and a small first aid pouch and bayonet on the left. A small water bottle and canvas holder are kept to the rear but, as always, load bearing equipment is minimal to the point of being spartan. While for the NATO soldier used to his creature comforts and expected to fight a prolonged battle on foot or “dug in” and out of the contents of huge bergen rucksack, this might seem daunting; for the motor rifles soldier firmly attached to his squad transport and used to less “soft” living standards, it proved sufficient for generations of conscripts.

Under the baggy hood of the snowsuit we see an M40/58 steel helmet worn over the top of a padded traditional “ushanka” hat. The enlisted man’s quality ushanka with its synthetic pile “fish fur”, ear and neck flaps is part of the standard cold weather uniform of the soldier and in arctic sub-zero conditions, almost essential when wearing the modernised WWII pattern helmet – even though it does make our soldier’s head seem disproportionately large. Purists will note our rifleman sports a slight beard, while in peacetime this would be against Soviet army regulations the Red Army was notoriously lax and inconsistent with enforcement of dress standards (somewhat inevitable given the epic size of the organisation and the huge variance of terrain it occupied) and in times of war Russian soldiers have been seen to sport moustaches and beards of varying styles, albeit rarely.

Our cold war warrior wears the high leg “sapog” jackboot which defined the red army rifleman of the cold war period, although in actuality he is as likely to be issued the incredibly warm “valenki” felt boots. If unlucky enough to be stationed in a harsh region like Siberia, during an extremely harsh Russian winter, even several pairs of socks would not suffice to prevent frostbite if normal leather boots were worn. While Axis WWII snow suits were often quilted or blanket-lined, the Soviet model is almost transparently thin and clearly viewed as



“disposable”, like the KLMK camouflage suits of the 70s. Protecting our soldier from the cold but completely concealed by his snowsuit is a padded winter field uniform in the traditional Russian army shade of “olive” khaki.

INDESTRUCTIBLE KIT

As hardwearing as our soldier’s under-suit, is his personal weapon. In this instance our rifleman carries an original AK47S with its distinctive under-folding stock. By the 1960s the Russians had largely replaced the AK47, with its heavy and uneconomical to produce milled receiver, with the improved stamped steel AKM (and AKMS, the “S” denoting a folding stock in both rifles); our man however is most likely from a second line unit, still using old stocks. Like all weapons of the AK series the AK47S is rugged and near indestructible. Its wide tolerances between moving parts made it less accurate than comparable NATO weapons (despite an optimistic sighting system with settings up to 1,000 metres, a good rifleman would be lucky to hit a moving man-sized target at 300) but ensured a high degree of reliability in hostile environments. In this case its simple construction, minimal amount of working parts and loose tolerance ensured it was unlikely to freeze solid or shatter in extreme cold when exposed to the high temperature generated by copious automatic fire – the immediate setting after “Safe” on the AK series of weapons.

Once again this month’s warrior is a little “niche” and specialist but for those of you that already have the Soviet basics, it’s very cheap to pull off. At the moment surplus dealers seem to have immense overstocks of these 1950s/60s snowsuits (and as with all Russian kit these were used for decades after their date of issue) and so prices are as little as £10 for a suit. As it’s all-encompassing, you can really wear anything warm underneath it and can dispense with a proper “Russian” set of thermals, giving you a Russian loadout at a knock down price. Sure, it might not snow that much in the UK but £10 for a snowsuit lightweight enough to stow in an ammo pouch, makes it a good investment to take along to winter games where the weather report (or just looking out your window when you wake up) tells you snow is a distinct possibility – even if you rock a more modern impression.

If you don’t have any other Russian cold war kit then, as always with an army of over a million conscripts at its height, there is no difficulty in getting the basics like steel helmets and webbing for a fraction of the price of modern kit. Sure it’s “no frills” but it’s also indestructible!

One thing you can be sure of if you buy Russian field kit, it’s probably going to last longer than you will!



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LIGHT 'EM UP!!!

IGGY ROBERTS KNOWS A THING OR TWO ABOUT LIGHTING, SO WE ASKED HIM TO TAKE A LOOK AT THESE ENERGIZER HARD CASE TACTICAL TORCHES, SUPPLIED BY THOMAS JACKS.

TACTICAL LIGHTS ARE PLENTIFUL ON THE MARKET in our sport and Thomas Jacks have recently got hold of a new breed of tactical light from Energizer; one that can do all you want using only one or two AA batteries.

In fact there are three variants from Energizer; the BRAVO Tactical Swivel Head Light, the ROMEO Tactical Molle Vest Light and the TANGO Tactical Helmet Light. Each one serves a different purpose and replaces currently available models.

Energizer looked at the market and noticed that they all used batteries that were either not common place, or expensive (or both) and that tactical lights also burnt very bright, meaning they churned through more power and used up expensive batteries quickly. However, after conducting more research, Energizer concluded that there was no real requirement for these very bright tactical lights and with that in mind, they designed a range of tactical lights that use only one or two AA batteries. This means that the batteries are far cheaper and widely available throughout the world, plus their burn time is extended due to the bulbs not burning so brightly.

All three models have either a separate bulb, or filter for red green and blue lighting. The Bravo and Tango have the option to be infrared, for use with night vision equipment as well as a flashing setting to use in communication. They can be purchased in a tan or black colour and are all rugged and drop proof.



BRAVO TACTICAL SWIVEL HEAD LIGHT

The Energizer Bravo Tactical Swivel Head has multiple coloured LEDs with a broad range of applications. It is powered by 2 AA batteries and its 130° swivel head can signal to overhead assets, or light the way ahead with an extremely strong clip allowing the light to be mounted to a tactical vest or any tactical kit that uses Molle.

It is designed with "Dual drive technology" which will allow the unit to operate on either one, or two, AA batteries. It features a quick-lock, hinged battery door with batteries inserted tips (+ terminal) first to be activated and one (or both) can be put in the other way round for storage.

The Bravo Swivel Head is fitted with a high-



intensity (70 lumen max) white LED for traditional flashlight use; Red LED for standard light discipline; Blue for medical and map-reading applications; Green for transportation, aviation and defect detection and Infrared (IR) for use with Night Vision – including an IR IFF capability. All visible output LEDs have 3 output levels – Low, Medium and High and LEDs are rated for a life of at least 50,000 hours. There are discrete individual controls for each LED with a central “lockout” switch so that the unit does not activate unintentionally. All visible LEDs can be activated at the same time. Visible and IR LEDs cannot.

Technical Specification

Dimensions of the Bravo Swivel head are, 133x54x29 mm. It weighs around 148g, can be powered by 1x or 2x AA batteries and will push out 70 Lumens on the high setting, 36 Lumens on the medium setting and 20 Lumens on the low.

In the Field

I found the Bravo swivel head to be a great torch. It attached well to my chest rig and it did seem to stay in place throughout a skirmish. However I felt it better to be kept in a pouch and brought out when I needed, to save it being attached all the time to the outside of my kit. It is very durable and even in intense rain it carried on performing as required – even longer than I did before I gave up due to looking like a drowned rat!

At home it has proved useful too. I used it a few times to light up areas an ordinary torch would have been challenged. Due to its swivel head I could rest the torch on the ground and shine the light to the angle I required. The batteries have not run out yet – even though left it on overnight to try and drain them!

The Bravo swivel head torch is priced around £69.95

ROMEO TACTICAL MOLLE VEST LIGHT

The ROMEO Tactical vest light offers high output white light at 50 lumens and is supplied complete with screw-on red green and blue filters.

The Vest Light offers up to an 8 hour runtime on one Energizer Ultimate Lithium AA battery.

A battery cap lockout prevents unintentional operation and the LED is rated for a life of at least 50,000 hours. The Vest Light is fitted with a lanyard hole and a durable Molle clip, magnets, for vest/pocket attachment.



Technical Specification

The ROMEO Tactical vest light dimensions are, 93x40x23 mm. It weighs in at 57g and is powered by a single AA battery that powers the light burning at 50 Lumens.

In the Field

This is a modernised version of the good old military issue “right angle.” It is a lot smaller and burns far brighter than the old issued right angle and I found it clips securely to the molle loop on my vest and pretty much remains out of the way. However the quick release clip is a worry. I can see how it's a good idea when life or death is in question and you don't want any snagging hazards but to us airsofters it would mean we just lost another bit of kit in some far flung corner of the last site we skirmished at. Gladly I didn't lose it – in fact it is still securely clipped to my kit now. So that issue aside, I am impressed with the ROMEO.

It would be a great torch to have in your bag or car for those emergency moments, when you just need that light.. The fact that it has magnets on the back of the clip means it's great to just put in your car to light up the engine bay in that time of need – or the abyss that is under your seat to find your wedding ring...

This is the cheapest of the three and comes in at a very reasonable £26.95



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TANGO TACTICAL HELMET LIGHT

Designed from the outset to survive the rigours of everyday operation by military/law enforcement operatives, the latest variant of the TANGO Tactical Helmet Light is the epitome of versatility in an ultra-compact, ultra-lightweight design.

Hand-holdable as a flashlight and supplied with 5 mounts that allow attachment to almost anything in the tactical environment (helmet, head, weapon rail, molle, belt, cap, clothing or vehicle), you will be hard pushed to find another light currently available that is so versatile.

It utilises simple, tactile controls and a simple programming system, so that you can choose High, Medium, Low or Low, Medium, High output modes in the visible spectrum. You can also programme which secondary LED colour you want to have operational at any one time – Red, Green or Blue. You also have the added option of a high output flash mode in each of the visible spectrums.

The Energizer TANGO Helmet Light is IPX7 rated (waterproof for 30 minutes in 1m of water) and has been drop-tested to 3m on hard ground – so should stand the rigours of airsoft with no problems.



Technical Specification

The TANGO Tactical Helmet Lights dimensions are 75x32x26mm. Its weight is 48g and it is powered by a single AA battery, outputting at 41 lumens on the high setting and 18 lumens on the Medium setting.

In the field

I chose to mount the TANGO Tactical Helmet Light on my FAST helmet. It easily lights up what's in front and down range. It takes a few times to remember the button functions and setting it up how you want it but once it's done though, it does all you would expect from it.

Its mount is rock solid and you can just forget about it until you need it in low light. Its low profile is in keeping with the sleek design of your primary weapon system or helmet. I have used it in rain and snow without fail and it performs and will work easily for the required amount of time before you need to change battery.

I have now bought the TANGO Tactical Helmet light and use it in both urban and night games. Away from the game field I find it useful mounted on the end of my cap and use it for running in the dark and camping.

This is the most expensive Energizer torch out of the three costing £81.95

I found all of the torches a welcome change in the world of tactical lighting because they don't require expensive batteries and they run for longer before needing to change battery. Their tough design means I am happy to rely on them in all airsofting and every day/night uses.

If you want to find out more about the Energizer Hard Case Tactical lights or where you can buy them from, please visit: <http://www.thomasjacks.co.uk> or call 01789 26100



CARTOON

THE ADVENTURES OF MAG



©2015 - What's your favourite thing about Airsoft?

Chris Chatburn - hiwez.com



RESOLVE: JOIN THE ELITE

AFTER A MONTH'S BREAK, BOB AND FAITH MAKE A WELCOME RETURN TO GIVE US AN UPDATE ON WHAT 'A' SQUADRON HAS IN STORE FOR US THIS YEAR.



"AS ANY SOLDIER ON OPERATIONS WILL TELL YOU, YOU HAVE TO KEEP LOOKING AHEAD AND MOVE ON TO COMPLETE YOUR OBJECTIVES."

ATTENTION TROOPERS! DID YOU MISS US? We couldn't make it last month, what with various commitments and the general busyness of the season but we're back and ready for action... Airsoft Action!

This month we want to give you a run-down of what you can expect from 'A' Squadron in 2015.

A new year is always a time for reflection on what's behind but good or bad, it's never wise to dwell too long on the past. As any soldier on operations will tell you, you have to keep looking ahead and move on to complete your objectives. Mistakes may have been made, obstacles arose to slow you down or stopped you in your tracks but a determination to press on will ensure you keep progressing and ultimately reach "the mark".

Working with Bob as long as I have has given me an opportunity to understand first-hand some of the characteristics that led him to achieving his goal of working at the very top of our Armed Forces. When faced with a set-back, whether big or small, I've lost count of the times that he's commented "over your shoulder". Never a question of this being an option, it's an order to leave the problem where it belongs and work on a solution instead. With this attitude you always move in the right direction.

So let's look ahead. This time next year what do you want to have accomplished? Think about it and write some ideas down. Then it's time to plan how you're going to make that happen. Don't get bogged down in the planning because the most important thing is that you get going. To achieve anything you have to act. So act now! Plan new adventures for yourself. Challenge yourself. Most of all enjoy the experience. Your goals may change along the way but if you enjoy the journey then you've already set yourself up for success.

Maybe we can tempt you to come along and get involved with the Training Wing this year? We've got loads of exciting courses and events which we'd love you to be a part of. There really is something for everyone at whatever level.

We have various public courses scheduled for the first half of the year, so to whet your appetite here's a run-down for the next few months.



A-SQN : TRAINING WING : WINTER/SPRING COURSE DATES

28th February 2015 – NAVIGATION : MAP & COMPASS

Learn how to map read and navigate safely and confidently. Ideal for anyone wanting to get out on the hills more often; for anyone wishing to join the army or attempt Selection with the SAS, Marines etc. Classroom and exercises on foot. All abilities welcome.



7th March 2015 – SF PATROLLING SKILLS

You will learn about the famous SAS 4-man patrol, how to move & operate tactically and how to overcome any obstacles you may encounter. Promotes strong individual performances and team work.



21st March 2015 – CTT3 : ROOM COMBAT

The third stage in our Counter-Terrorist Team Training programme. CTT1 & CTT2 are ideal build-up to this course but not compulsory. You will learn about the development of Close Quarter Battle tactics and how to storm a series of rooms, to rescue hostages, as a member of an SF assault team. Real black ops tactics of the elite.



18th April 2015 – SF PATROLLING SKILLS CONTINUATION

Building on the SF Patrolling Skills course you will be tasked with various objectives, behind enemy lines, which you must complete with your patrol. You will need to draw upon all your skills; weapons, navigation, leadership and teamwork to ensure success.

9th May 2015 – CTT1 : PISTOL

10th May 2015 – CTT2 : PRIMARY WEAPON

Learn to shoot and handle your pistol and main assault weapon correctly, confidently and accurately. Professional weapons safety, practise drills and techniques to put you ahead of the game.

These courses are also suitable for CPOs and those who wish to progress to live fire.



16th May 2015 – SURVIVE TO FIGHT (Adults only)

30th May 2015 – SURVIVE TO FIGHT (All ages)

Join A SQN for a weekend of bush craft and survival training in the heart of SAS country.

Topics covered include the 5 most important survival elements; shelter, water, food (trapping/skinning), fire and navigation.



All courses include certificate of completion signed by Bob Podesta MID (ex-22SAS).

Please be aware that these dates may be subject to change.

INTRADON II

As regular readers will be aware, 2014 saw us join forces with H.T. Immersive Simulations to present our first ever Airsoft Mil-Sim experience – and what an experience it was!

After the superb feedback from all those involved there was no option but to schedule OP INTRADON II. Besides, we can't leave the hostages to their fate at the hands of the Russian terrorist organisation "Golden Dawn" can we?

The on-going storyline is already developing and INTII will have new twists and challenges of its very own. We'll be leaving the close-quarter environment and heading out into the wilds of SAS country. We don't want to give too much away just yet but let's just say that those who have completed our Navigation and Patrolling courses will be eligible for specialist roles in the game.

CTS RANGE – INTRODUCTION TO DAS

Finally we know that many of you have been waiting patiently to hear news of the CTS Range. We are excited to announce that our first official training day and introduction to DAS (Dynamic Action Sport) will take place on Saturday 14th March 2015.

The day will start with a briefing from us and thorough pistol

safety and handling instruction from our ex-SAS expert Bob Podesta. We'll then hand over to Rob Robbins who will introduce the concept of DAS, how it all works and the ins and outs of the various competition stages.

After that, the rest of the day will be spent running you through some mini-scenarios and the competition shooting will begin. You'll get to see how Bob tackles the drills and go head to head with the SAS!

Places are limited and priced at £100 for the day.

Any 'A' Squadron Trooper who has completed "CTT1 : Pistol" receives £50 discount.

Hire kit available on request for a small additional charge.

We will shortly be finalising our plans for a regular club night and venue hire details. The space is ideal for anyone wishing to practise their IPSC, IDPA, DAS and close quarter combat skills.

You can follow news at: www.facebook.com/CTSRange

As always please keep in contact with our day to day news via our Facebook page www.facebook.com/asquadron Find us on Twitter www.twitter.com/a_squadron

If you would like to contact us about anything discussed in this month's article and for all training enquiries please email trainingwing@a-sqn.com or phone 07762 507 146.

Until next time this is 'A' Squadron signing out.



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TACTICAL LUGGAGE

OVER THE COURSE OF THE WINTER JERRY NOONE HAS BEEN WORKING THROUGH THE NEW RANGE OF PACKS FROM VIPER TACTICAL AND NOW IT'S TIME TO SHARE HIS FINDINGS!

THE WORLD OF TACTICAL PACKS, rucs, gear-luggers, haulers or whatever you may like to call them is a wide one and it's a market which is fiercely competitive – not just in relation to price but also when it comes to materials, construction and design features. Any manufacturer of tactical gear worth their salt will offer models of different shapes and sizes within their range and the designers are constantly coming up with new innovations to deal with the ever-changing needs of the end user.

A decent pack, whether it's for daily use or for more arduous adventures, is something that we all need in our "gear locker" and has to be a piece of gear that we can rely on. If you're packing all your gear for a MilSim weekender into it, the last thing you want is for a shoulder strap to let go or a zip to break and dump all your kit on the ground; from personal experience this will inevitably happen at the most inopportune moment possible!

Over the years I've had numerous rucs ranging from 20 litre day packs, right up to monstrous 90 litre mountaineering sacks designed for multi-day use. I've always tried to invest wisely and never go for "cheap and cheerful" and along the way I've picked up some key elements that I will always look for when I'm about to part with cash.

The first thing I look for in a ruc is the size; in the UK we normally refer to pack sizing in terms of "litres", which essentially will tell you the volume of the carrying space internally. I usually work out the job I need the pack to do and try to find one that is large enough but not oversized. If you have more space it can lead to you over-packing with unnecessary items (just watch the film "Wild" to see a good example). Packs may come in different shapes, sizes, or configurations so it's more than possible to have two 20 litre packs that look totally different but, in fact, are the same overall capacity.

This leads me onto design; what do you need to be carrying? One of my absolute pet peeves is folk that carry kit dangling off their ruc with bits knocking and clanging together. If you look at the design features, work out what you need and what you don't. Superfluous features may have a "look factor" but add bulk and weight where they really don't need to be. If you need a helmet carrier, fine. If you don't it's just another flap or mesh to get caught up. Do you need additional MOLLE in place? If not, go for a slick sided pack. For big load haulers you'll need good shoulder straps and a solid waistbelt to help distribute weight evenly. Really THINK about what you need before you buy!

Next up are fabrics and construction. For a tactical pack that's



MIDI

Viper

going to get dragged around, sat on, thrown in and out of vehicles and generally abused, you need to look for a heavy duty fabric that will stand up to this. Fabric technology is constantly changing and improving so luckily for us there are strong, yet light materials out there now. That's all to the good but these materials need to be put together well too, so look at quality of stitching and sturdiness of buckles and zips; all of these are potential points

of failure so make sure everything is up to the job!

Taking all these points into consideration will lead you to the rucksac that you really need, one that will remain with you for a considerable time and serve you well. VIPER have really pushed the boat out with their new range, using great materials well put together in a number of totally new designs. This really is an impressive feat and I have to say that every single model is worthy of your consideration. What I find most amazing is that they've still managed to keep the cost of the packs down without cutting corners and there is literally something for everyone within the lineup.

THE RANGE

Starting things off is the **Shoulder** pack; at 10L this makes is a great little range bag. It features a large main compartment with small zip pocket and two nylon sleeves with Velcro secured openings, of which one has elastic retainer strap. There are 3 zip pockets at the front with a number of nylon sleeves, elastic bands and single plastic carabiner, these can act as convenient organizers. A padded pocket on the back as well as multiple MOLLE attachment points and D-rings placed throughout the bag, including shoulder strap, offer additional carrying space. The pack has a single adjustable and padded shoulder strap which allows the bag to be worn over the left or right shoulder. There's also a stabiliser strap and belt loop which keeps the pack from swinging around too much. Top all this off with a large Velcro ID panel over the front pocket with one of the new rubber patches; £29.95 gets you an awful lot of pack here!

One of my favourite designs in the new range is the **One Day Modular** pack. At 13.5L this is a versatile design as it can be worn on its own or attached directly to the back of a MOLLE plate carrier. It's a lightweight and multifunctional tactical day pack which may be used as an individual backpack; with multiple compartments to store all the essential gear and an internal hydration sleeve, compression straps for easy size modifications and adjustable shoulder straps for comfortable and secure carry, this really does tick all the boxes for a minimalist load carrier that's perfect for a day skirmish; there's more than enough



SHOULDER

room for BBs and gas, food, water, and even some pyro. If you carry a Windshirt or something similar (as I do as a matter of course) then you can scrunch that up at the top of the front compartment so it's easy to access. These come in at the £26.50 mark so they're a bit of a steal really.

I'll come back now to my earlier comment in relation to design as there are three packs all around the 20L mark that all have very specific features.

At 19.5L the **Mini Modular** Pack is a multifunctional military and tactical load carrier which may be used as an individual backpack, or easily attached to a MOLLE back panel on a plate carrier. With multiple compartments to store all the essential gear and internal hydration sleeve, compression straps for easy size modifications and adjustable shoulder straps for comfortable and secure carry it's once again a very versatile beastie and there's a mesh helmet carrier located on the front with compression straps for adjustment. There are two external side pouches and three front pockets with additional sections of MOLLE. At the £45.00 mark this is great value.



MINI MODULAR

"THESE PACKS HAVE BEEN PUT TOGETHER TO LAST AND I HAVE TO SAY THAT THE FINISH AND QUALITY OF WORKMANSHIP IS BETTER THAN I'VE EVER SEEN FROM VIPER IN THE PAST."

Again at around £45.00 is the **Midi**. Made from durable 600D Cordura nylon, the Midi Pack is a perfect every day pack with multiple compartments to store all your essential items of gear, an internal hydration sleeve, compression straps for easy size modification and adjustable shoulder straps for comfortable and secure carry. There's a large main compartment with three small pockets and hydration hose port, a front zip pocket and a mesh stow pouch on either side. It has a padded mesh back and a sturdy carry handle on the top. It's a slick design overall which in a plain colour would make an ideal "covert carry" pack.

At £54.95 comes the 20L **Recon Extra** pack. Made from durable 600D Cordura nylon, this more traditional design features two large compartments with various zip and mesh pockets inside, two front pockets and a built-in Velcro pocket on the back for a hydration bladder. The pack has a specially shaped padded back for extra comfort and maximum airflow (Ventex System back panel), ergonomically designed and adjustable padded shoulder straps and a removable waist strap with strong plastic buckle. The pack allows for volume control and load stability thanks to a number of a lateral compression straps and you can easily attach further pouches externally as there are a number of robust nylon MOLLE sections as well as loops and D-rings on shoulder



MIDI (back)



ONE DAY MODULAR



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£40.50

VIPER MIDI PACK



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VIPER ONE DAY MODULAR



£26.95

VIPER SHOULDER PACK



£22.50

VIPER SPECIAL OPS POUCH



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VIPER OPERATORS POUCH



£13.50

**VIPER MODULAR
WATER BOTTLE POUCH**



£8.95

**VIPER MODULAR
PHONE POUCH**

RECON
EXTRA

straps. Although this is not a big pack in any way, I would say that it would be a really strong contender for an overnight patrol pack if packed well and sensibly; there's certainly enough space for a lightweight sleeping bag and three quarter Thermarest, for rations and a hexi cooker and for all those little personal sustainment items. As you've probably gathered I like this little pack a lot!

Moving up into gear for weekends where you need to carry a reasonable load, at 36.5L the

Ranger is a really useful design, although correspondingly the price goes up to around £84.95. The Ranger features a single large main compartment with covered sturdy 2-way zippers. This compartment opens wide for ease of access and has four zip pockets and a nylon pocket with elastic drawcord and nylon retaining strap on the back panel for securing a hydration bladder. There are also hydration hose/antenna ports, one leading to the back compartment and two to the outside. There are also two drainage holes at the bottom. A large pocket on the front of the pack sits behind a MOLLE platform, which can serve as an admin pocket as it has various pouches, pockets and pen slots for keeping everything organised. Above the admin pocket there is a small compartment with two zip pockets and two lined open top pouches. You also get two side zip pockets, one small top pocket between the sturdy carry handle and shoulder straps and a fully padded compartment on the back that can be used for storing a hydration bladder of up to 3L, or even a laptop.

On the top of the pack there are two ports to the main compartment for either a hose or communication wiring. A pair of heavy duty compression straps with quick release buckles are placed on either side of the pack, with a sturdy strong carry handle on the top. The Ranger has a stiffened and specially shaped padded back for extra comfort and maximum airflow (Ventex System back panel), ergonomically designed and adjustable padded shoulder straps, a chest strap with elastic section, as well as a removable waist belt.

The final new model is the aptly named **Mission**. This again features one large main compartment with covered sturdy 2-way zippers. This

compartment opens wide and has two zip mesh pockets on the front wall and four internal compression straps (2 vertical and 2 horizontal) for load stabilisation. There are three nylon loops on the back wall for securing a hydration pack, with hydration hose/antenna ports and two drainage holes at the bottom. There is one large pocket on the front of the bag which is a perfect admin pocket, featuring three map/document pockets, two radio pockets with elastic cords, and pen slots. On the front of the admin pocket and just behind the MOLLE platform, there is a compartment with a vertical zip opening and under the admin pocket there is a small compartment with internal zip and open top mesh pouches. The Mission also has small side pockets and a padded compartment on the back that can be used for storing a hydration bladder or a laptop.

On the top of the pack there are again three ports to the main compartment for a drinking tube, earphones or communication wiring. Two heavy duty compression straps with quick release buckles are placed on both sides of the pack and there are three strong carrying handles on the top and over the side pockets. Again the Mission benefits from a stiffened and specially shaped padded back for extra comfort and maximum airflow (Ventex System back panel), ergonomically designed and adjustable shoulder straps, a chest strap with elastic section, as well as padded and removable waist system with a non-slip section. At 38.5L and costing around £85.00 this looks to be the perfect MilSim companion.



MISSION



RANGER

AN IMPRESSIVE LINEUP!

VIPER have REALLY upped their game with this super range of packs and with the 25L Recon and 40L Special Ops models still available this is quite an offering.

All the new pack models are made of bomber tough 600D Cordura, with sturdy zippers and buckles throughout. These packs have been put together to last and I have to say that the finish and quality of workmanship is better than I've ever seen from VIPER in the past.

All the models are available in V-CAM which works perfectly with Multicam and MTP, as well as plain Green, Tan, and Black. As an added extra all the models also come with a pair of VIPER's own new V-LOCKS and at least one of their Tactical D-RINGS; these are great for attaching small items, securing communications wiring or a drinking hose, or even just hanging your gloves from when you don't need them. You'll also get one of VIPER's new rubber velcro patches as well.

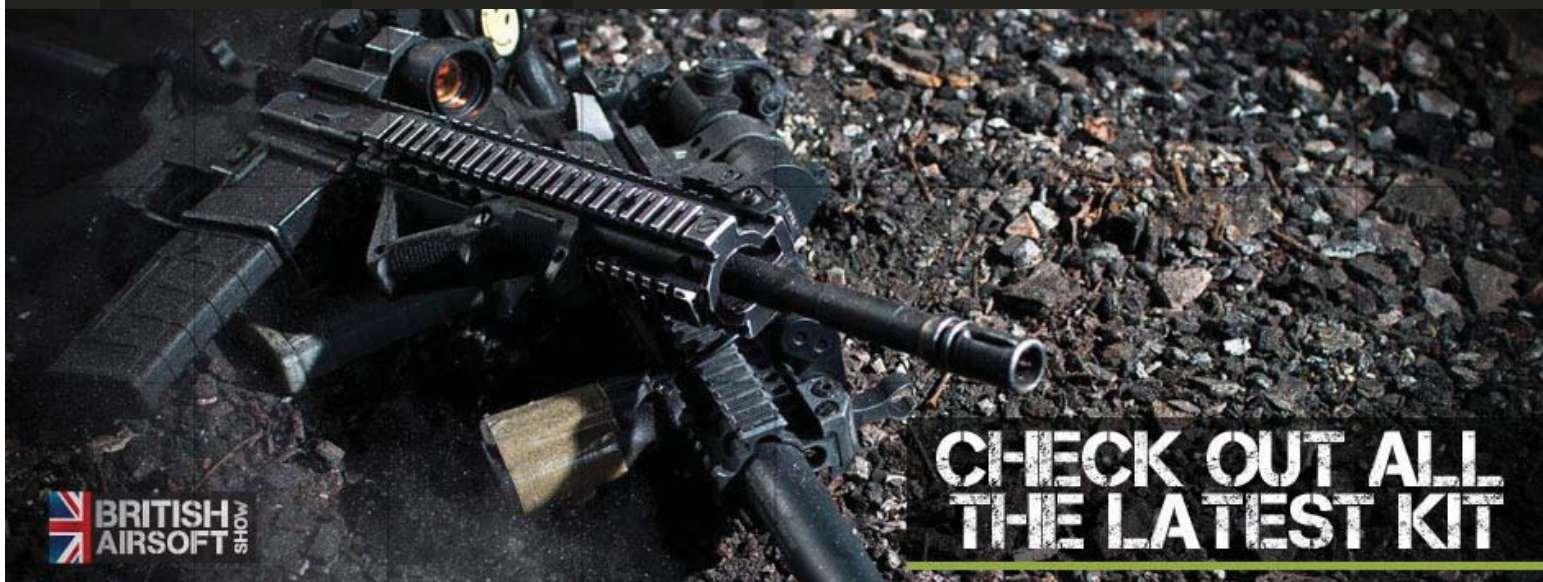
All in all and having been able to put all the new models through their paces over a few months now, I have to say that VIPER are onto a winning formula with these keenly priced, well made packs and I for one look forward to seeing what they come up with next!

To keep up to date with the new VIPER tactical products as they become available please visit www.viperkit.co.uk. You'll also be able to find full stockist details there too. You can also follow VIPER TACTICAL via their own Facebook and Instagram pages which are regularly updated.



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BRITISH AIRSOFT SHOW 2015 – PREVIEW

NOW IN ITS THIRD YEAR AT STONELEIGH, THE BRITISH AIRSOFT SHOW IS ONCE AGAIN SET TO ATTRACT AIRSOFTERS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. NIGE LOOKS AT WHAT THIS YEAR'S SHOW HAS IN STORE.

IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE 12 MONTHS AGO that we were gearing up to attend the largest airsoft show in the UK. From humble beginnings, the British Airsoft Show has grown from a single airsoft rifle range "tacked" onto the British Shooting Show, to a fully-fledged show in its own right, complete with all that that entails.

In 2013 the British Shooting Show moved to its new home at Stoneleigh Park, in Warwickshire and, for the first time airsoft was no longer "integrated" into the show, it was given its own space and the "British Airsoft Show" was born. OK, the space was not much more than an old cow-shed-cum-car-park and it was bloody cold – but it was bigger than anything we'd had before and, judging by the crowds of interested/curious/unsure-of-what-they-were-looking-at people crowding around the stands, we had a winner on our hands.

Back then, **Airsoft Action** was still seen as "the new kid on the block" and I have to admit it kind of felt that way, with our stand being almost tucked away in a corner of the show – but we still managed to pull a couple of exclusives by having both the first Magpul PDR and Kriss Vector on our stand.

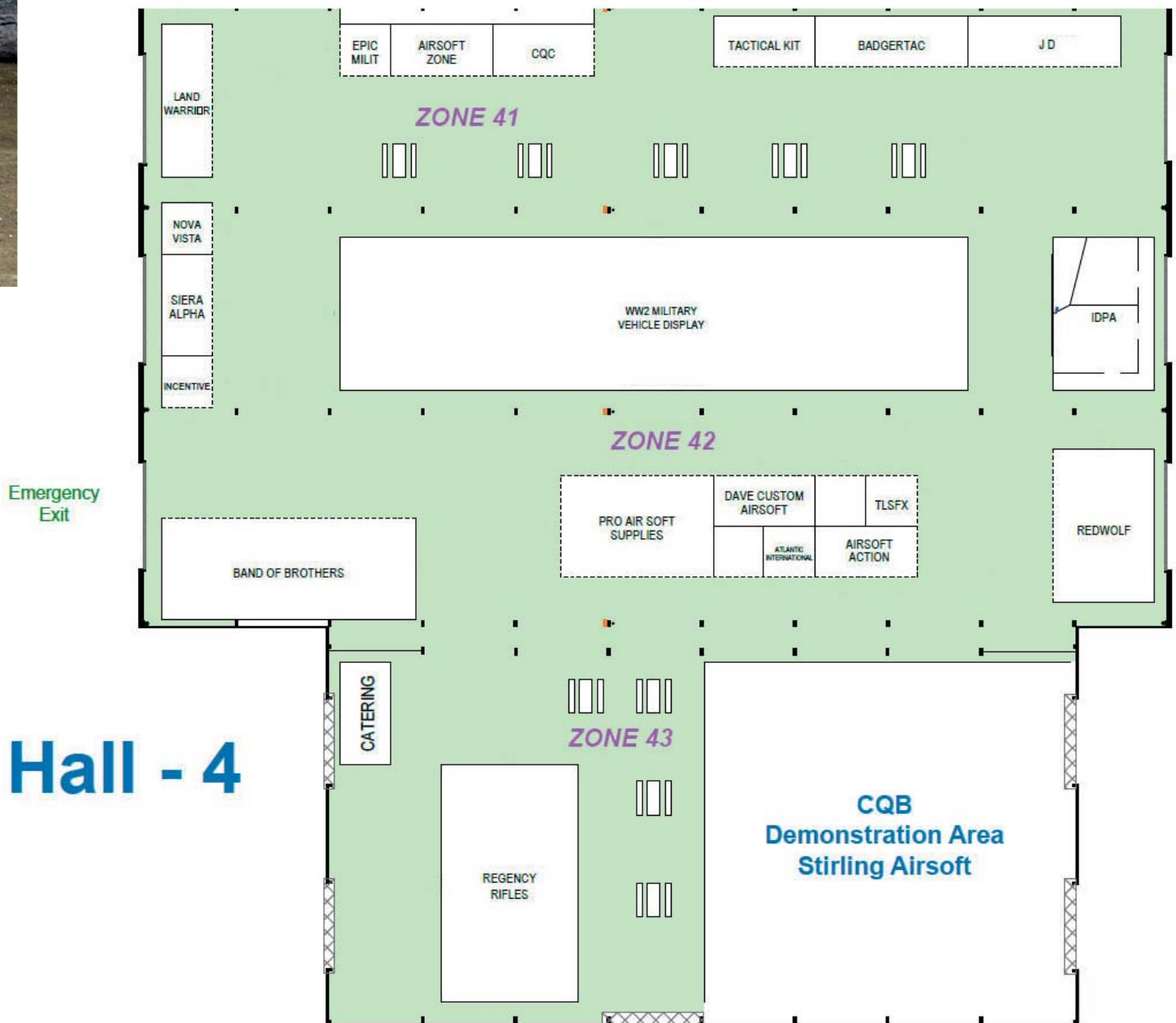
Last year the British Shooting Show was extended to run over three days and, of course, the British Airsoft Show would do the

**PICS FROM
2013...**



SHOPLIFTERS WILL BE
BEATEN, STABBED
AND STOMPED
SURVIVORS WILL
BE PROSECUTED

British Airsoft Show



Hall - 4

same. The organisers had learned much from the previous year and the area had been fully carpeted and, more importantly, heated! The whole thing looked and "felt" much more professional and there was a definite air of anticipation exuding from the many exhibitors as they waited for the anticipated crowds to appear... but, to be honest, they never really did. Don't get me wrong, it was a good show but it just didn't seem to be as "busy", or as crowded as in previous years and this was put down to the fact that the show was spread over three days, not two.

The British Airsoft Show 2015 will again be slightly different, not least because the central area will no longer be taken up by airsoft stands but a collection of Military Vehicles. This will most certainly bring many more visitors into the area but a few exhibitors have expressed some concern about the show "drifting away from its core purpose", which is to promote airsoft. I will be writing a review in next month's issue and it will be interesting to see what their thoughts and comments are then.

OK, so who's going to be at the show?

All the "usual suspects" will be there, along with some names that might not be as familiar. At the time of writing, this is the list of

Exhibitors (in no particular order):

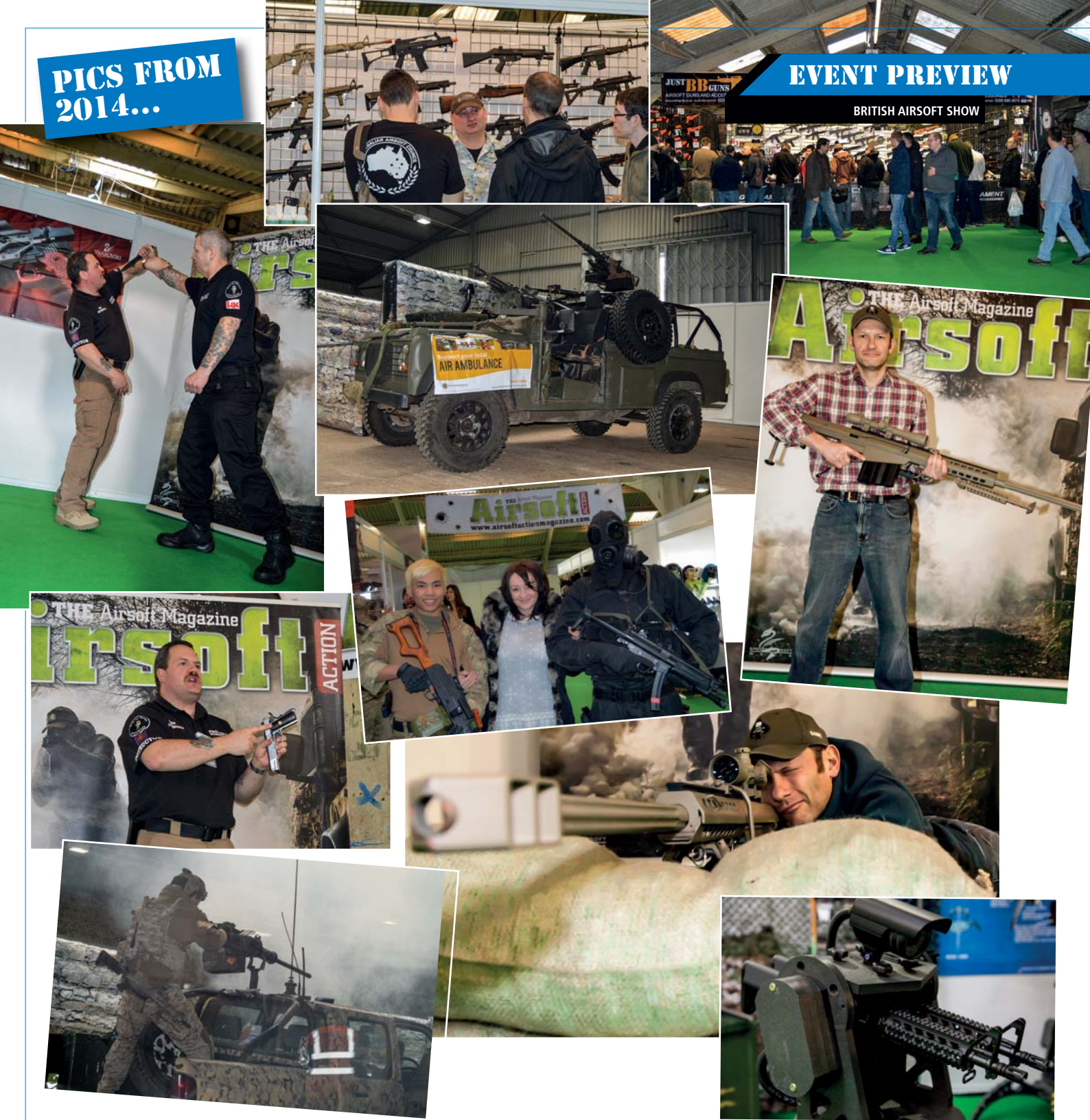
Land Warrior Airsoft
Epic Militaria
Airsoft Zone
CQC
Tactical Kit
BadgerTac
JD Airsoft
RedWolf Airsoft
TLSFX
Atlantic International
Dave's Custom Airsoft
Pro Airsoft Supplies
Band of Brothers
Incentive Designs
Sierra Alpha
Nova Vista
... and, of course, **Airsoft Action**.

The show wouldn't be the same without some live action to watch and once again Stirling Airsoft will be running a CQB Demonstration

**PICS FROM
2014...**

EVENT PREVIEW

BRITISH AIRSOFT SHOW



area, where you can book in and take part if you wish – all for free!

I understand from Stirling Airsoft that they will probably not be running vehicle demos this year (which I think is a real loss to the show), as the area has been reduced in size to accommodate a .22 range run by Regency Rifles. This range is one of a number at the show, including an IPSC/IDPA range run by RedWolf Airsoft, so there should be plenty of opportunity if you fancy testing your skills in a variety of disciplines.

Over the course of the weekend, we hope to have a number of visitors to the **Airsoft Action** stand. The guys from Pro-Tact will be with us again – the “men in black” made quite an impact last year and also raised a decent sum of money for Charity, by taking a small donation from those who wanted to be photographed with them. Andy and the guys also ran a series of demos and training sessions on the **Airsoft Action** stand and will be doing so again this year.

Sniper One, Dan Mills was also with us and hopes to be so again, other duties permitting and we will also be visited by BelTac’s

latest development of their awesome “Sentry Gun” – more than that I am not allowed to say, you’ll just have to come and see it!

I am also absolutely delighted to confirm that we are expecting a very special visitor on the Friday. “Rusty Firmin” may not be a name you instantly recognise (if you don’t, I suggest you get onto Google) but you almost certainly will know of an operation he was a key member of: *Operation Nimrod*, which ended the Iranian Embassy siege in London on 5th May 1980.

I won’t steal his thunder by telling you too much as Rusty will be on the AA stand throughout the 13th to answer questions and sign copies of his book, so come along and have a chat. He will also be doing a short presentation about the Embassy siege and his work with the SF Charity, Pilgrim Bandits, on Saturday morning.

Personally, I am looking forwards to show. It is one of the (all too few) opportunities I get to chat with the many friends, players and supporters that have made **Airsoft Action** “*The Airsofter’s magazine of choice!*”

Hope to see you there!

Airsoft Zone



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HAILING FROM SHROPSHIRE, T.W.A.T. HAVE BEEN ON THE SCENE FOR FIVE YEARS AND ENJOY THE SPORT FOR ALL THE RIGHT REASONS.

TEAM BACKGROUND

Telford & Wrekin Airsoft Team are a team that play in CQB and FIBUA/MILSIM environments and was set up in 2010 by local likeminded airsofters, in a bid to gain new members who want to get together as a team and play as a team.

Our team name may be quirky but it's where we live and skirmish. We are based in Telford and Wrekin and are an Airsoft Team, hence our team name T.W.A.T. We play at numerous sites including our own Team Practice venue on private land.

The Telford Wrekin team is of 10 key members with a high interest in enrolling dedicated new members. We like to introduce individuals to a sport that takes the love of tactical shooting and combines them into a controlled safe sport that promotes Teamwork, Self-confidence, a safe understanding of weapons, lots of social interaction and above all, FUN. We always encourage people to take part as we enjoy promoting the sport.

TEAM STYLE

The team was initially set up by a group of friends aimed at getting involved in airsoft as days out and to have a laugh. It initially began engaging in skirmishes at standard sites. We mainly worked as a team though our main goal wasn't just to win but to have a laugh as friends. We'd play the game to a high level while laughing at times before advancing to the next stage. We have now developed more into a professional team on the theme of a PMC group, engaging and working cooperatively at games but while still goofing about with one another. We are referred to as the "tw@s", not just due to our name but due to our laddish behaviour to one another. While we attend shoots monthly we even recently raised £670 for Combat Stress with a public charity shoot June 2014. This took a very long but rewarding process to get permitted. We worked along with airsoft





retailer JD Airsoft plus sites Urban Six and First & Only, to gain items for the event, to promote it further through awarding days out on sites for competition winners and showing individuals how to get involved in the sport itself, along with the process to correctly gain UKARA (and to even become a team member).

TEAM KIT:

We initially started the team as a group of friends looking to get into the sport. While still developing as a team we started in full black spec-ops load out but as we developed further, we invested in specialised kit for individual members with a general theme on

military load outs, The new theme primarily is PMC uniform for general skirmishes, which consists of Tan/Coyote lower half with a black or tan upper. We also have a wide variety of unique load outs for MilSim and normal skirmishes. This includes special load outs such as TW-01's 1980 Northern Ireland load out, TW-03's Juggernaut load out, TW-04's 101st airborne uniform and more.

Each member also has their own unique arsenal suitable to their playing style, from close quarter scenarios and also long ranged, the team is divided into squadrons with equal firepower and tactical advantages in set up scenarios.

KEY MEMBERS:

The core team currently consists of

Darren Pamplin (Team Leader/ Squad Leader) TW-01

Greg Williams (Second IC/ Organiser) TW-02

Gaz George (Squad Leader/ Contour operator) TW-03

Matthew Bloomer (Team Scout/ Breacher) TW-04

Adam Endean (Fire Support/ Grenadier) TW-05

Daniel Bell (Medic/ Coordinator) TW-06

Ash Cooper (Team scout/ Breacher) TW-07

Lewis George (Rifleman) TW-08

Ryan Rigby (Rifleman) TW-09

We have a key interest in recruiting new members and introducing individuals into the sport, all members attend many game types and scenarios including Milsim and standard skirmishes

FAVOURITE SITES

As a team we are quite widely recognised by sites, players and the even the public as we do what we can to promote the team and airsoft itself. Throughout the years we have been spreading the name of our team through regular site visits and games. We primarily play at Urban Six airsoft but we also operate on numerous sites including First & Only, C3 Tactical, Fireball, Frontier Airsoft, S.W.A.T airsoft and many more.

FUTURE GAMES

We aim to attend regularly on skirmishes approximately monthly to get the most out of the airsoft experience, so we will be attending a number of weekend shoots and also visiting as many sites as we can. Our main goal is to encourage people into the sport and even potentially into our team, we regularly update our attending dates (if anyone is interested they can contact us on our Facebook page) and we take a huge pride in introducing people into the sport.


We are also undergoing a discussion regarding another charity event as we were successful with setting up the first one and will be hoping to attend a larger venue with more potential profit for a charity organisation, such as Combat Stress.

For information about our team and even participating with us please visit like and share <https://www.facebook.com/TelfordWrekinAirsoftTeamPublicPage>

We also have our very own YouTube channel which is rapidly growing, please subscribe to our channel for future content either type the link or search "Telford Wrekin airsoft" channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/gaz750>



A collection of military equipment is laid out on a patterned blanket against a light-colored stone wall. The items include a camouflage helmet with multiple ventilation holes, an M4-style assault rifle with a black rail system and a magazine, a tan tactical magazine pouch containing several black magazines, a black handgun, and a map on a clipboard. The rifle has a blue number '69' on its lower receiver. The magazine pouch is labeled 'MAGPUL' and 'MAGPUL'. The map shows a detailed layout of a building or facility.

WITH A NUMBER OF MOVIE RELEASES
OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS,
THE US NAVY SEAL TEAMS HAVE HAD
MORE THAN THEIR FAIR SHARE OF
EXPOSURE ON SCREEN. THESE MOVIES
HAVE INSPIRED NUMEROUS LOADOUTS
AND THIS MONTH JERRY NOONE PULLS
TOGETHER A COUPLE OF HIS OWN.

IN THE TEAM

MY PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH "THE TEAMS" though goes back a long way; ever since seeing pictures of the guys doing their VBSS (Visit, Board, Search and Seize) work in the Persian Gulf during 2003. Some 250 SEALs from Teams 3, 8 and 10, along with approximately 500 members of the Special Boat Teams went to work both at sea and on land. In March 2003 SEALs were amongst the special operations troops that made a lightning quick seizure of important oil related infrastructure and the GOPLATS (oil platforms) in the Al Faw peninsula. As the war progressed members of other SEAL Teams were deployed and provided the very tip of the spear in taking the fight to the enemy.

My favourite picture from that period has now become quite famous and will undoubtedly pop up if you search "SEAL Images"; it's the one of the three SEALs, two kneeling and one standing alongside containers on the deck of a ship. Right there in that picture is a lot of what you need to know for your "early 2000's" loadout; Merrell and Altama boots, modified three colour DCU, Protec helmets with and without NVG mounts, goggles, shooting glasses, kneepads, MBSS (Maritime Ballistic Survival System) plate carriers, CQB length M4s, tan Safariland holsters and the now famous "Calico Jack" patch. Although in the main, reference pictures show the SEALs of this period in the three colour DCU, there are many of them in flight suits and plain tan BDUs as well so I decided for the first loadout to mix things up a bit.

UNLOADED

The basis for my "early 2000s SEAL" was a TRU set from US manufacturer Tru-Spec. The Tactical Response Uniform is basically the same cut as the US Army Combat Uniform and has all the great features of that without the useless digital pattern. The shirt has a high mandarin collar and the four pocket layout gives you space to store everything you need. There's a Velcro covered Admin Pocket on each arm; these pockets are bellowed so as to stay flat when not being used but expand to offer a larger capacity when needed. There are two more pockets located on the chest area and these are slanted to offer easy access.

The trousers have a ten pocket setup which gives you space to securely store everything you need. There are two slanted and bellowed cargo pockets on the legs; Tru-Spec use slanted pockets on their TRUs so that inserting or removing items with tactical gloves becomes a much easier task and the pockets are also bellowed for extra capacity while remaining flat. Two smaller pockets are located on the lower of each leg, sometimes used for field dressings. Both the shirt and the trousers have easily accessible pockets for inserting neoprene protection pads.

Although these days it's not unusual to be able to find real deal MBSS setups online, at the time Allied Industries were flat out supplying the guys that really needed it so I had to search round for something that maintained the look. I was also mindful of price, as although I wanted to get "feel" of the loadout right I didn't want to bankrupt myself at the same time!

If you look around now you'll find numerous reproductions of the MBSS carrier from the likes of Pantac and Flyye but at the time the closest thing I could find was the Compact Plate Carrier from Condor; these look very similar to the MBSS but retail around the 30 quid mark and Condor also offer a fine array of pouches to go onto it at reasonable prices too. I simply chose eight M4 open top CQB pouches, an admin pouch and a hydration pack which gave me very much the "direct action" feel I wanted. The PACA armour worn under is an option (and historically correct) but to keep things light and fast you can run without this.

In relation to belt kit, I keep things super straightforward with just a tan Blackhawk! belt, a tan dump pouch from 5:11 and... a Safariland holster for the SIG P226 (MK24). I may be wrong but I've never come across a decent repro 6000 series holster so when one of my mates said he was getting rid of his real one I'm afraid the "sensible head" went out the window and a rather substantial amount of money changed hands. If you want to keep the costs down though



"I'VE NEVER COME ACROSS A DECENT REPRO 6000 SERIES HOLSTER SO WHEN ONE OF MY MATES SAID HE WAS GETTING RID OF HIS REAL ONE I'M AFRAID THE "SENSIBLE HEAD" WENT OUT THE WINDOW AND A RATHER SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF MONEY CHANGED HANDS."



MISSION PACK

Capacity: 38.5 litres (approx)
Material: 600D Cordura
Colours: V-Cam, Coyote, Green, Black
Dimensions: 52 x 24 x 32 cm

Internal hydration sleeve
Ventex system back panel
Adjustable hip pad/harness
Padded shoulder straps and sternum strap with QR buckles
MOLLE webbing attachments located on exterior pouches including D-Rings
Multiple compression straps
Hydration/coms outlet
Side carry handle
2 x V-Lock
1 x D-Lock

SRP £84.95



RANGER PACK

Capacity: 36.5 litres (approx)
Material: 600D Cordura
Colours: V-Cam, Coyote, Green, Black
Dimensions: 46 x 33 x 26 cm

Multiple compression straps
4 point, Ventex system back panel
Padded shoulder straps and sternum strap with QR buckles
MOLLE webbing attachments located on exterior pouches including D-Rings
Side carry handle
Internal hydration sleeve
Internal retaining straps/bungees
Felt lined exterior utility pouches
Hydration/coms outlet
2 x Velcro ID panels
2 x V-Lock
1 x D-Lock

SRP £84.95



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RECON EXTRA PACK

Capacity: 20 litres (approx)
Material: 600D Cordura
Colours: V-Cam, Coyote, Green, Black
Dimensions: 45 x 22 x 20 cm

Internal hydration sleeve
Internal retaining straps/bungees
Felt lined exterior utility pouches
Hydration/coms outlet
Multiple compression straps
4 point, Ventex system back panel
Padded shoulder straps and sternum strap with QR buckles
Grab carry handle
MOLLE webbing attachments located on exterior pouches including D-Rings
2 x Velcro ID panels, 2 x V-Lock, 1 x D-Lock

SRP £54.95



MIDI PACK

Capacity: 22 litres (approx)
Material: 600D Cordura
Colours: V-Cam, Coyote, Green, Black
Dimensions: 43 x 23 x 26 cm

Internal hydration sleeve
Padded shoulder straps and sternum strap with QR buckles
2 x side stow pouches
Internal Nylon utility sleeves
Mesh back
Compression straps
MOLLE webbing attachments located on exterior pouches including D-Rings
2 x V-Lock
1 x D-Lock

SRP £45.00



MINI MODULAR PACK

Capacity: 19.5 litres (approx)
Material: 600D Cordura
Colours: V-Cam, Coyote, Green, Black
Dimensions: 42 x 23 x 34 cm

Mesh helmet hammock located on front with compression straps for adjustment
Internal hydration sleeve
2 x External side pouches
Hydration/coms outlet
Padded shoulder straps and sternum strap with QR buckles
Multiple compression straps
MOLLE webbing attachments located on exterior pouches including D-Rings
Compatible with Plate Carrier
1 x Large Velcro ID panel
2 x V-Lock, 1 x D-Lock

SRP £45.00



ONE DAY MODULAR PACK

Capacity: 13.5 litres (approx)
Material: 600D Cordura
Colours: V-Cam, Coyote, Green, Black
Dimensions: 19 x 20 x 43 cm

Hydration/coms outlet
Multiple compression straps
Internal mesh pocket to accommodate hydration bladder
Shoulder straps with QR buckles
MOLLE webbing attachments located on exterior pouches including D-Rings
Compatible with Plate Carrier
1 x Large Velcro ID panels
2 x V-Lock
1 x D-Lock

SRP £26.50



SHOULDER PACK

Capacity: 10 litres (approx)
Material: 600D Cordura
Colours: V-Cam, Coyote, Green, Black
Dimensions: 31 x 20 x 16 cm

Retaining straps/bungees
Exterior utility pouches
Mesh back panel
Shoulder straps with QR buckle
MOLLE webbing attachments located on exterior pouches including D-Rings
2 x Velcro ID panels
2 x V-Lock
1 x D-Lock

SRP £29.95



SPECIAL OPS POUCH

Capacity: 5.5 litres (approx)
Material: 600D Cordura
Colours: V-Cam, Coyote, Green, Black
Dimensions: 20 x 15 x 18 cm

MOLLE webbing attachments located on exterior front
External mag/phone pouch
Sectional internals
Fold out compartment
Removable shoulder carry strap
Compatible with Plate Carrier
1 x Large Velcro ID panel
2 x V-Lock, 1 x D-Lock

SRP £24.95





a Condor ambidextrous holster on a drop leg panel would be in keeping and cost a LOT less.

For protection I chose simple tan kneepads from ALTA along with some cut down Nomex flight gloves. A shemagh works well with this setup and gives a little extra "bb pro" and either a tan ballcap or a sprayed up skate helmet will round things out; in this case the helmet is a real Protec and the ballcap is from Tactical Assault Gear. The boots here are tan Altamas which are period correct. If you run comms it's easy these days to pick up a replica "SEAL Swimmer" headset online.

LOADED

I've lived with my "early 2000s SEAL" loadout for a few years now and I'm afraid that (like many) I got seriously caught up in the whole AOR1 "thing". Luckily for me a number of manufacturers, both real and repro, were getting on board to ride this particular train so even going back a while I was able to start putting my updated loadout together.

For the basis of the loadout I needed to find a CRYE combat shirt and pant in AOR1; searching online I found a number of genuine articles but a)

I'm a tall lad and finding them in my size was a challenge and b) what I did find required a bank loan to finance the purchase! A number of friends were also pursuing similar loadout ideas and had bought reproduction

sets from the likes of Emerson and TMC but the colours of the initial runs were harsh and wrong. Further searching eventually led me to Dragon Red Airsoft



in the Far East, who had the "AOR1 Navy" set of shirt and trousers from Allwin. I took a chance and ordered these in and when they arrived I was overjoyed at the accuracy of the reproduction. Dragon Red have some awesome reproductions of "operator kit" and if you've never visited their website you should do so. Their service is also spot on! The great news though is that more and more manufacturers are getting on board with the AOR patterns so be sure to check out Semapo Gear, Ferro Concepts and OPS Tactical, all of which you'll find available in the UK at www.hueys.co.uk.

In relation to the gear then London Bridge Trading are the real deal; there are so many reference pictures of members of the Teams using their gear, specifically the LBT 1960 series of chest rigs married up with either a 6094 or 6094 "Slick" plate carrier, so that it seemed the logical way to go. Once again, you can lay your hands on the real deal in relation to LBT but if you're going for the "re-enactor" level of accuracy then expect once again to be looking at some serious triple figures! Luckily a number of manufacturers have started producing excellent reproductions of both the rig and the carrier and I ordered in both from TMC in the Far East. Sadly when these arrived the colours were also slightly off but a dusting of tan matt spray paint soon had them looking more respectable.

The repro 1961A chest rig is a great piece of kit. Just like the "real deal" it's made of heavy duty Cordura. There are four M4 magazine pockets with hook and loop closure, two radio pockets with 3/4 webbing and side release adjustable closure, two pockets for night vision goggles/batteries located in front of radio pockets (flap with hook and loop closure) and two additional utility/fragmentation grenade pockets on the outside of night vision goggles/battery pockets (webbing with side release adjustable closure). There's also an interior pocket with elastic loops and hook and loop closure for storage of maps or spare magazines. The padded, adjustable shoulder straps have a side release for attachment of backpack (not included) and elastic and hook and loop closures on the shoulder straps act as a channel for antenna wires or hydration bladder hoses. Overall this means you can carry virtually EVERYTHING you need for the day in this rig but if you need more space then adding a tan rucksack will do the job.

Accessories are a little more involved for this loadout too. From the numerous reference pictures I looked at, a few items were "must haves". A tan Flyye personal security lanyard immediately went on the list, as did a retained dump pouch, a tourniquet pouch and a personal first aid kit pouch. Most of the pictures showed this last item being worn in the small of the back. Although the Safariland holsters are still very much in use it seems like the "operator chic" Kydex holster has also become widespread amongst the Teams; you can pick up one of these now at a reasonable price from the likes of UK based Clearwater Holsters.

Boots for this loadout are the AKU "SEAL Spiders" and a darn good boot these are too. If you want something a bit different and also something you could use on a more regular day to day basis, then pictures also show the SEALs using both Salomon and Asolo mountain boots or running shoes. Simple Mechanix gloves work well here but I decided to include the new "Ironsight" gloves from Outdoor Research Tactical as they're my favourites right now!

Once again I've added a tan neck gaiter for some added face protection, worn under a FAST helmet repro from VIPER. I've configured the helmet to work with my Peltors and added a V-Lite, Princeton Tec "Charge MPLS" helmet light and an NVG counterweight pouch. This is a recent addition to the loadout and has been sprayed up with some of the new NUPROL paint.



BANG ON!

Now there is an argument that a lot of the reproduction equipment featured here steals value from the real thing and in many ways I do agree with that line of thinking; companies, some of them relatively small, have put their hearts and souls (and not to mention a LOT of money!) into developing their designs.

That said, do we as airsofters need to buy the real thing? We're certainly not going to be putting our lives on the line wearing it and it always troubles me slightly to think that if I bought a real LBT 1961A Chest Rig, would that be one less for the guys out there that need it to do their jobs?

This is possibly one for Gadge to garner opinion on but for me sometimes it's a case that by building an entire loadout I am tying up my cash in yet more gear! This is part of the addiction of the airsoft world and it's very easy to get caught up in the excitement of creating a new set of gear and spend unwisely. The "early 2000's SEAL" gear has been a work in progress over a period of many years, whilst I managed to pull together the AOR1 version in about six months; I just wanted it complete and consequently spent my pocket money on the gear rather than going out to play airsoft!

My advice to you, as ever, is to spend wisely, take your time and do it right - and don't for a moment lose sight of WHY you're building your loadout. It's gear to play airsoft in and if we don't support our site operators then we'll have nowhere to play. Make sure you keep a few quid back to get out there and drive on to your very own "Zero Dark Thirty" moment!



GEAR LIST AND WHERE TO GET IT

www.viperkit.co.uk

VIPER make some of the most cost-effective tactical clothing and equipment available, and their quality just keeps getting better and better. The new range of packs, tactical gear, footwear, and clothing is being released already, and believe me when I say there are some surprises there!

www.511tactical.com

Probably one of the originators when it comes to all things tactical and they're constantly releasing new garments, footwear, and gear. Keep an eye on their website for updates!

www.military1st.co.uk

Need tactical gear? Military1st is pretty much your one stop shop in this respect. All the Condor and the very latest Helikon gear is on their website, along with so much more!

www.military.outdoorresearch.com

I'm still scratching my head as to why none of the UK retailers seem to have picked up on the Outdoor Research tactical line of gloves and accessories. Their products are absolutely top notch, but as of now you'll still need to order them from overseas!

www.weairsoft.eu

For more details on their new paints as well as gas, BBs, batteries, and accessories please pay WE Airsoft Europe a visit! They've been busy in recent months with new product releases, and believe me when I say there's a LOT more to come!

www.lbtinc.com

If you want to see some drool worthy tactical gear then a visit to the London Bridge Trading website is well worth it! They have setups of all the kit configurations used by the Teams and a lot more too

www.trekitt.co.uk

Hereford based Trekitt Mountain Sports are the sole UK supplier for the excellent AKU range of boots. They've also got some of the finest outdoor pursuits gear on offer on their website so they're well worth a look!

www.dragonredairsoft.com

The Dragon Red Airsoft Outlet stock some absolutely righteous "operator gear". My purchase of the AOR1 Navy Combat suit was faultless, and their service was excellent in every respect! Do make sure you check out their sizing chart before ordering though!

www.ukmcpro.co.uk

UKMCPRO are another great UK based supplier of military and tactical gear, working with some of the best brands around. At the time of writing they had the Tru-Spec TRU not only in stock, but also on sale so go check them out.

www.facebook.com/Clearwaterholsters

A good friend of mine doing custom Kydex work; holsters, knife sheaths, mag pods, you name it! Go and check out his work on the Facebook link above!



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AA DEBATES ALWAYS GET A GREAT RESPONSE BUT THIS MONTH'S WAS JUST ABOUT THE BIGGEST SO FAR, WHEN GADGE ASKED FOR YOUR VIEWS ON "HOME TEAMS"...



DOES BATTLING FOR THE "WALK-ONS" TEAM against the locals leave you blue, or does having your band of brothers split up to "even out the sides" undo all your team training and make you see red? Are you a site operator who refuses to have a "site team" as it's more hassle than it's worth, or are they the best advert your site could have and a credit to your business? Is your local site something you aspire to be invited into, or an impenetrable clique you're slightly miffed with?

Having been on a few site teams in the past, I personally remember the amazing camaraderie from rocking up every weekend with guys I knew well, all in our team camo with well-practiced tactics. For us it was great fun and we thought we were the dog's dangles and really looked the business – but the flip side was that, unbeknown to us, we were pretty off-putting and intimidating for "walk on" players, or groups who had come along on say a stag do.

It took us a while to realise that open days were soon becoming "us and them" as our team was LARGE with about 25-30 players and would usually end up with us being the entire "Red Team" or whatever for a day.

This inevitably led to a few accusations of things like "those guys don't take their hits" or "those guys think they are better than everyone else"... neither, I hasten to add, was true but you can understand that if you set yourself apart with a team patch, team camo and team call signs then some people are going to lump you all into one basket, if even one of you doesn't live up to exemplary standards in the game.

I've also been on the other side of the coin and played against site teams where it certainly "felt" that the marshals were turning a blind eye to "their" lad's misdemeanours (and in fact, one legendary event occurred when our team played another site and the chap running this "away game" changed the scenario

parameters mid-game to allow his side to win... His logic was "things change in real war" – to say we were a bit bemused is an understatement).

But that's the negative aspects; as aforementioned being on a team can give you some fantastic opportunities to try aspects of the game that just don't work as a lone ranger. It's hard to be the "support gunner" with no squad to support, most strangers don't take kindly to a "squad leader" they have never met giving them orders and being the "recce section" only works if you've guys to report back to you can rely on to act upon your intel.

We put all these questions (and more) out on our Facebook page and here's what you said!

Matt Keen: "Nothing quite like rocking up at an unfamiliar site and getting the better of a home team. In all honesty I think home teams tend to often have a negative image. Although in my experience as someone who plays in a team that could once have been considered a home team, you have a chat in the safe zone and normally people have a good laugh and recount the various adventures of the day. Which in my book is what it's all about."

Billy Gumbrell: "Badger Tac/Bluestreak Airsoft refuse point blank to endorse a home team. Over the years Ratty and I have seen so much negativity, politics and back-stabbing regarding home teams that when we opened Bluestreak that was one of the golden rules. We are very fortunate to have at least three teams use us as their regular site and any team is welcome to play as often as they like at our place but, no matter how often they play, they are their own team choosing to play our site and not a "home team"."

Martyn Butler: "A good home team is one that makes others welcome to the site and not feel as if you're invading their territory and you shouldn't be there. Every site has its regulars but the





attitude of these players can change how the day is. If I'm met with a hostile team who don't want others at the site, then even if I'd had the best day's airsofting in terms of the actual game play, I'd think twice about going back to the site."

Spike Cooksley: "As a member of a Home Team I think it's an amazing opportunity. We have an excellent relationship with our site and its regular players and, as you say, it opens up possibilities of gameplay that wouldn't otherwise come up. A lot of people like the idea of besting the home team and we welcome that (it's happened before and there's no shame in losing)."

Nick Thompson: "From the first time I used my home site we were made to feel welcome by the home team. They went out of their way to make sure everyone enjoyed the game and I cannot fault them for their attitude and approach to all aspects of the game and running the site. They are a great bunch and I consider them all friends rather than anything else. My son and I were invited onto the team late last year and I do consider it an honour."

Steve 'Buzz' Lomas: "The problem you have with home teams are, if you have one w*nker you're all called w*nkers and the site suffers. It only takes one member not hit-taking to give it a bad name. Yes, you can vet people but still this problem exists."

Matt Furey-King: "If I find there's a site team I won't book in. 90% of the time they are stuck up, blustering, cheating tw*ts who can do what they like because they are mates with the marshals."

If you've got a collection of players who know the site and scenarios, for f*ck's sake split them into each team rather than using paying customers for targets. When I helped run a site, we'd never consider doing it. Actually, we enjoyed killing each other allot!"

Garry McColl: "I think some site teams have a bad reputation because they see themselves as elite and bend the rules. I know of a team up in Scotland notorious for the bad rep, which is exactly why I stay away from "their" site or a site I know they are visiting."

Jethro Holberry: "I've only played airsoft for a year – where has it been all my life! I have discovered the clique teams and though I've never found them intimidating (toy gun, rubber knife... very frightening), they will shun you out on the field and even treat you as an annoyance if you try to co-ordinate with them. This however changes as your face keeps

turning up and as long as you're not being a cheating dick, you'll never have a problem! For new players the home team factor can really suck, leaving you feeling frustrated and isolated. Don't be, the sport is worth all the crap you have to go through at the start!"

Matthew Adams: "A well run site team, where they help the new players is amazing. I used to be a part of one site team and whenever there was an objective or building that a bunch of new/inexperienced players were struggling to take, a few of the site team would rock up and lend tactics (and BFGs) to help them. They would feel better as they took it with a little help rather than failing. But when a group of a dozen or so of a site team start acting like a separate SF unit and doing all the objectives etc. so the other players are redundant, it defeats the point of a site team."

Markus Hunt: "On the majority they tend to be well organised cliquy elites who know every inch of the site including rules exploits. That's a sweeping statement of course and only based on my personal experience where a home team outflanked the visitors by going through the safe zone with live guns nearly lighting me up while I was repairing a gun with no eye protection on! On the whole you do feel like you're just moving targets on a training day for them. If your home team is an exception to the above then huge kudos to you because you are doing it right."

Phil Bucknall: "My home site is Fireball Squadron and as well as having a Fireball team itself, which is there for anyone to join irrespective of whether they're in another team or not, there are many other teams that use it as their home site too. So much so that there is never a bias in sides leaving one team knowing all the little nuances of the land and having the upper hand. In fact quite often the other regular teams insist on being on the opposite team to Fireball members, as we all like shooting each other. In the end it's one big family and each team is just another branch of said family. Well, that's how it feels to me."

Peter O'Connor: "People who are anti-home "teams" have to also realise we pay to play too and if there are 10 or 15 of us together we want to play on the same side. It isn't because we feel elite or crap like that, it is just that we want to play on the same side as our mates. I'd be miffed if we got split up but realise games need to be balanced and sometimes we have to but to constantly be forced to play against my



friends would ultimately put me off the sport. If folk don't like playing against the locals then perhaps it is them that should up their game rather than whinge that they are losing. Blaming others for your inability to think outside the box and find a tactic to beat them is just sour grapes."

Tom Appleby: "At my site us marshals wear a team patch but rarely play together. We always split up unless a regular team on one side are kicking ass too much. Only then will we play together but this doesn't happen often. Regardless of what a home team is actually like, they're almost always perceived badly. Its s**t but that's how it is."

Steve Kendrick: "By all means form a team but playing at the one home site and dominating isn't exactly good when you can experience a whole wealth of different sites and playing scenarios."

Angelo Di Vito: "By the definition 'site team' instantly suggests that a certain amount of bias towards them when you visit their club. Now I started (and run) Team Rhino and we visit clubs and sites all over the country and I've personally found very little

bias towards the home team. If anything, I found that at some clubs they were put more under the cosh due to them bring the home team. Where they do have a big advantage is knowledge of the site which is a huge bonus."

Brendan Robb: "I don't like the idea of a team or group that are sponsored by a site and being perceived as getting special treatment and discounts. I do like having regular established teams at a site, that you can test yourself when playing on the other team and pick up skills from them when playing on their team, along with being inspired by them to push yourself further in the hobby."

Luke Bamber: "I've played sites where there are home teams, or not necessarily a home 'team' but a large collection of regulars and the marshals lumped all of them into one team vs the rest and it certainly feels like they are given preferential treatment. They just appear to come across pretty arrogant cos they are mates with some Marshal who also turns out to be a dick."

Chris Clark: "Massive difference to what we have in New Zealand where we don't have sites, we have a number of clubs in different cities and regions. We then in turn have our own fields we use and then host other clubs. Being so small over here we tend to know the other clubs very well so no matter which club event we go to we are still amongst friends."

Mark Kerley: "Although the group I'm in aren't a 'team' as such, we are regulars at our local site and also help out as marshals when needed. However we certainly don't get any bias in our favour, if anything we are treated more harshly as we are expected to be an example to others/new players. I've had bad experiences of home teams and bias in their favour and really can't see the point in it, as it can ruin the day for visiting players and give the site a bad rep."

Martin Glasgow: "Suck big hairy balls!!! As soon as I hear there's a home team, you know it's gonna' be a crap day!"





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**TRYING TO FIND A HIDDEN ENEMY?
PRO-TACT'S ANDY NIGHTINGALE GIVES US
SOME REAL-WORLD POINTERS ON HOW TO
SPOT YOUR FOE**

YOU SUDDENLY FIND YOURSELF ON YOUR OWN and searching a deserted building, trying to make your way out to safety and back to the rest of your team. The area falls into a deathly silence as you move. You know the enemy is close by and maybe looking for you.

Weapons skills alone won't work in this scenario you will need your wits about you. You will need to find the enemy before they find you. Easier said than done. Or is it?

In this article we will look at how we can locate the enemy before they locate you by using "Target Indicators".

Target Indicators is the tactical term used that will give you an indication that someone is close by. This can be either the enemy, team members or even someone else and Target Indicators can be in many forms.

Normally you would only use your primary senses, your sight and hearing and dismiss other senses. However, light, smell and sound will play a big part of your search for the enemy, leading to vital information as to the location and strengths of the enemy (or even friendly forces). Just remember that what gives the enemy's position and location away can also give you away too!

When looking for the enemy don't just look for a person, look all around you for any indication that the enemy is close by, or has been in the vicinity that you are now in. If you are in woodland look on the ground to see if there's any recent disturbance to the soil and surrounding flora and fauna. In a building, especially one that is disused, look for any tracks in the dust. In areas that are familiar to you, you may notice things that have changed or have recently been moved. Such indicators could be that you notice a door that was previously open is now closed, or furniture that has



NOW YOU SEE ME...

been moved, maybe to make a barricade. The reflection of the enemy in a window, or the smell of recently used pyrotechnics is a giveaway.

Noise is a sure target indicator. Footsteps are a giveaway, both theirs and yours, also talking and heavy breathing after running are prime indicators that someone is very close by. Another audible indicator is kit. How many times have you heard someone's kit rattling during a game only for the enemy to hear it and open up on your position?

You will need to listen out for any unnatural noise for the environment that you are in. One of the biggest giveaways when teams are trying to be all stealthy and tactical, is kit scraping on walls when the enemy is moving along a corridor or wall. Gun fire is another one.

Light can pose a major problem for you when using a flash light to find your way in the dark but will easily give the enemy away if they too are using white light. Lights and lasers look cool but do more harm than good if not used in the right way. If the enemy is using light to try and locate you, or to just stop them from bumping into stuff, use it to your advantage; use their light to see your surroundings in the dark. Stay well away from lights and use it to gather information about the enemy and its strength.

Lasers are cool if it's not

yours. Follow the beam to drop your target. (I just love folk with lasers).

Shadows are another light target indicator. Your enemy is waiting for you around the next corner, ready to spring his well planned ambush but you get the drop on him because he didn't notice his shadow was in the open for all to see. This works both ways as it can easily give your position away too. Just remember that you may be well hidden in the morning but in the afternoon your position may be compromised by your shadow as the sun has moved position in the sky.

By far the biggest giveaways in airsoft are weapons.

Weapons, although they are the tools of our trade, are the biggest problem in terms of target indicators. Next time you're at your local skirmish site lookout for the lone weapon. You know, the one that's peeping around the corner of a building or poking out from around a tree. I say "lone weapon" but be sure it's attached to the enemy!

Believe it or not even smells will give you, or the enemy, away. I was once conducting a house search during the early days of my career and my team and I were just about to deem the building clear, when a colleague of mine noticed a strong smell of cigar coming from the sofa. We had already checked out the back of the sofa as it was about four feet away from the wall. When we lifted the sofa up to inspect underneath, we found that the bottom had been removed and the suspect was hiding inside. There was no smell of cigar coming from anywhere in the house. The suspect had smoked the cigars in his truck before entering the house and the smell had clung to him. If he had smoked in the house my colleague may not have noticed. If it wasn't for the smell of the cigars he had just smoked we would have missed him and he may have got away.

Another time a colleague and I were searching a house and noticed a boot under a pile of laundry. Convinced the suspect was trying to hide under all of the clothing (you will be surprised where





a fully grown adult can hide) we called for backup as we knew that the suspect was armed and dangerous. When backup arrived in the form of QRF we continued to search the pile of laundry only to find it was just a boot! However it was worth checking out as it could of easily have been overlooked and been the suspect himself hiding. It was an indication that a target was possibly hiding.

When searching or just trying to extract from a hostile environment, especially if you are on your own, don't assume that all is clear until you have checked it out first. If you think something is out of place, or you feel that something is wrong, then it is. Make sure your area is clear and safe to move through and look for all those indicators that suggest a target is there. As you move, think about what types of target indicators you are looking for and think that the enemy may be doing the same thing. Don't make the mistakes that you are looking for. That would be foolish.

If the enemy can give his position away by producing target indicators for you remember you too can be producing target indicators for him.

Stay safe and happy shooting.





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CHAMPION SHOOTER, MARK HURDING, JOINS AIRSOFT ACTION TO WRITE ABOUT HIS FAVOURITE SHOOTING SPORT: ACTION PISTOL SHOOTING



ACTION SHOOTING WITH PISTOLS has a huge following around the world, indeed, until the handgun ban in 1997 in the United Kingdom it was a pretty popular sport here too! It seemed to be gone forever until someone, somewhere in the UK got hold of the latest toy from Japan, an airsoft pistol! Well, as we all know there has been a massive improvement in reliability and quality of gas powered pistols (and airsoft kit in general) over the years and now Action Pistol Shooting is on the move again!

With many clubs in the UK now providing a regular opportunity to shoot "Action Pistol", the sport has grown from strength to strength and if you want to try it out for yourself, then get along this year's British Shooting Show, where there will be several "Pay & Play" stands set up. I'll be there too having a go, so if you want to any more information please stop by the **Airsoft Action** stand and I'll do my best to answer any questions you might have.

But what are these dynamic shooting events you can do with your airsoft pistol? I hear you ask. Well, it broadly breaks down into three main categories: Competition, Skirmish and Re-enactors. Today we will focus on Competition Shooting and the different events you can participate in.

Practical Pistol

The art of shooting can be traced back as far as the Middle Ages but it wasn't until the 19th century that shooting really developed into a sport. In the 200 years since, shooters have come together in a variety of organisations, at the local, national and world levels, to practice, perfect, and perpetuate shooting sports.

Practical Pistol is the most dynamic shooting discipline of all; it requires a blend of accuracy and speed so that you acquire a winning combination. Developed in southern California in the late 1950's, it quickly spread throughout the shooting world to Australia, Central and South America, Europe and Southern Africa. There are, like most competitive sports, rules and many of these rules exist to ensure the safety of all competitors and spectators, ignore them and you risk disqualification!



The competitor must “navigate his way around the Course of Fire engaging the targets as they come into view” however, there are a number of obstacles and trials that must be negotiated. The shooter must work out the quickest and most efficient and effective way to complete the course of fire and while often shooting on the move achieve the highest score, in the fastest time. Being very accurate will not win competitions here if you compromise on speed! Typically, a competition would have anywhere between 8 and 15 courses of fire known as “stages” and will include a combination of short, medium and long stages. Each stage will include multiple targets and often moving targets, targets that react when hit, penalty targets, or even partially covered targets, plus obstacles and movement. These all play a part in the challenging sport of practical shooting.

There are two divisions you can choose to shoot in. “Standard” division pistols use “iron” sights, although you can use fibre optic front and rear sights etc. and internal upgrades are allowed but ammunition in the magazine is limited to a specific number.

“Open” division shooters can use extended barrels, compensators, optics and there are no limitations for the amount of ammo in each mag. Holsters are compulsory and must be worn on the hip with most top level competitors choosing to opt for “speed” holsters.

Any airsoft pistol can be used but some pistols lend themselves better than others to Practical Pistol. The weapon of choice for nearly all Practical Pistol shooters is the glorious Tokyo Marui 5.1 Hi Cappa, even in its standard form it takes some beating and with an impossible amount of aftermarket parts, every component in the pistol (and the magazine) has an upgraded version available. This means that you can compete on a budget, or spend a small fortune if your heart desires. 30g–43g high quality ammo is common for action shooters due to the flatter trajectory that it affords.

The World Governing body, the International Pistol Shooting Confederation (IPSC) recently sanctioned Airsoft as an officially recognised category, known as AIPSC. Competitions are now being held around the world to the same ultra high standard and I am pleased to say that the UK has been leading the way. The United Kingdom Practical Shooting Association was founded in 1977 to represent IPSC shooting in the region. The UKPSA administers the sport, sanctions graded and championship competitions, selects the National Teams, affiliates clubs, organises training and maintains discipline and rules.

There are several competitions held throughout the year including the Annual European Championships, held at the Grange

in Coventry in the summer, with shooters coming from as far afield as Hong Kong to compete.

Accuracy and speed are recognized as the quintessential elements and have become the foundation of AIPSC shooting. There are only a few things you have to remember for competition shooting... Shoot fast, don't miss and don't get disqualified!

IPAS

IRON PLATE ACTION SHOOTING, or IPAS, was created by Steve Taylor and Graham Wilkes in the late 90s in response to the handgun ban in the United Kingdom. Essentially IPAS is speed shooting at steel plates, known in the USA as “Steel Challenge”.

The sport was developed to test a shooter's speed and accuracy with a pistol and the weapon is kept holstered on the hip (no shoulder-holsters or cross-draws allowed). The starting position is with the competitor facing the targets “square on”, with his hands raised in the “surrender position”. The shooter, on the start signal, engages the targets as fast as possible from a static standing position. Only one shot on each target is required and the plates can be engaged in any order, as long as the “stop plate” is engaged last. The total time to engage all the targets is taken and the fastest time wins. Sounds easy enough? Top competitors can complete a run of five plates in less than 3 seconds and remember, you start with the pistol holstered and your hands in surrender... Trust me, it takes some doing!

It is a very dynamic and exciting sport to both participate in and also as a spectator, the adrenalin rush is immediate and of course must be controlled, (there is no point in fast missing!) but the real world application for this type of shooting is obvious.

STEVE TAYLOR



“TOP COMPETITORS CAN COMPLETE A RUN OF FIVE PLATES IN LESS THAN 3 SECONDS AND REMEMBER, YOU START WITH THE PISTOL HOLSTERED AND YOUR HANDS IN SURRENDER... TRUST ME, IT TAKES SOME DOING!”



It would not be uncommon for Special Forces Operatives and law enforcement officers around the world to find themselves in a situation where they may need to engage multiple targets in a close quarter situation with their handgun, so practicing the techniques required to become a top level IPAS competitor would benefit any shooter who relies on his sidearm.

IPAS It is a totally inclusive sport, with shooters of all ages and abilities competing together. The IPAS association runs the sport in the UK and hosts several matches each year, held at various clubs throughout the UK. Safety is a priority so those new to the sport will be required to have safe gun handling. There are many clubs already shooting IPAS where you can learn how to shoot and practice safely before entering a competition. The IPAS association also offers coaching for "newbies" on how to shoot fast and accurate and training for individuals who wish to become an Official IPAS Range Officer.

The great thing about IPAS is its simplicity; it is very easy to understand, easy to set up and the scoring, well, your time is your score. There are between two and five metal plates "down range" depending on the particular stage being shot (the metal plates are usually 10"x10" and fixed to a wooden post standing about 40" high). The target plates are painted grey and the "stop plate" is either red or blue. The shooter is required to start with the pistol holstered on the hip (as mentioned earlier drop leg holsters, shoulder holsters etc. are not allowed) and the shooter's hands must be raised in the "surrender" position at the start of each run.

On the audible start signal the shooter engages each of the grey plates (one shot on each plate) in any order but the stop plate must be hit last. The last shot will stop the timer and the total time for that run will be called. There are five runs at each "stage" and the worst time can be discarded. The other four runs are added together and the competitor with the fastest overall time for the match wins. Simple!

There are various "divisions" available to suit an individual shooter's skill set and weapon of choice and two main categories; "Open" and "Standard". An Open division gun can be as "tricked up" as you like, with extended barrels, red dot sights or even lasers.

A Standard gun can be modified and enhanced but not with an extended barrel and can only have "iron sights". Although most competitors use CO2 powered air weapons firing .177 calibre lead ammo, 6mm airsoft pistols are becoming more widespread and popular.

All in all, IPAS is a dynamic and safe action shooting sport that will test the pistol craft of shooters of all abilities. Try it for yourself and you won't be disappointed

Practical Speed Plate and 2 Gun Competitions

The latest development in action shooting with Gas Powered Pistols is Practical Speed Plate (PSP). PSP combines the key elements of AIPSC and IPAS to bring a new level of challenge and excitement to the action shooter! Engaging steel plates through, around and even under obstacles in the fastest time possible. You still need to finish on the stop plate and your time is your score. You are allowed three runs at each stage but all three times are added together so it's important to be consistent. The competitor with the overall fastest time at the end of the competition wins.

Whether its AIPSC or PSP, 2 Gun events allow the competitor to carry his rifle and his pistol for a single course of fire. Some of the targets will require engagement with the rifle while others will entail the use of the pistol. Together, the 2 gun event combines perfectly the different shooting skills required for each type of weapon, a continued focus on speed and accuracy is still critical - as is the need for effective tactical analysis.

In future editions of *Airsoft Action* magazine I will bringing you articles and reviews about all types of pistols used for action shooting and the related kit, how they perform and also look at what upgrades are available and do they really make a difference? We will also report on competitions, events and shows and answer any questions you may have (email Mark on info@actionairuk.com).



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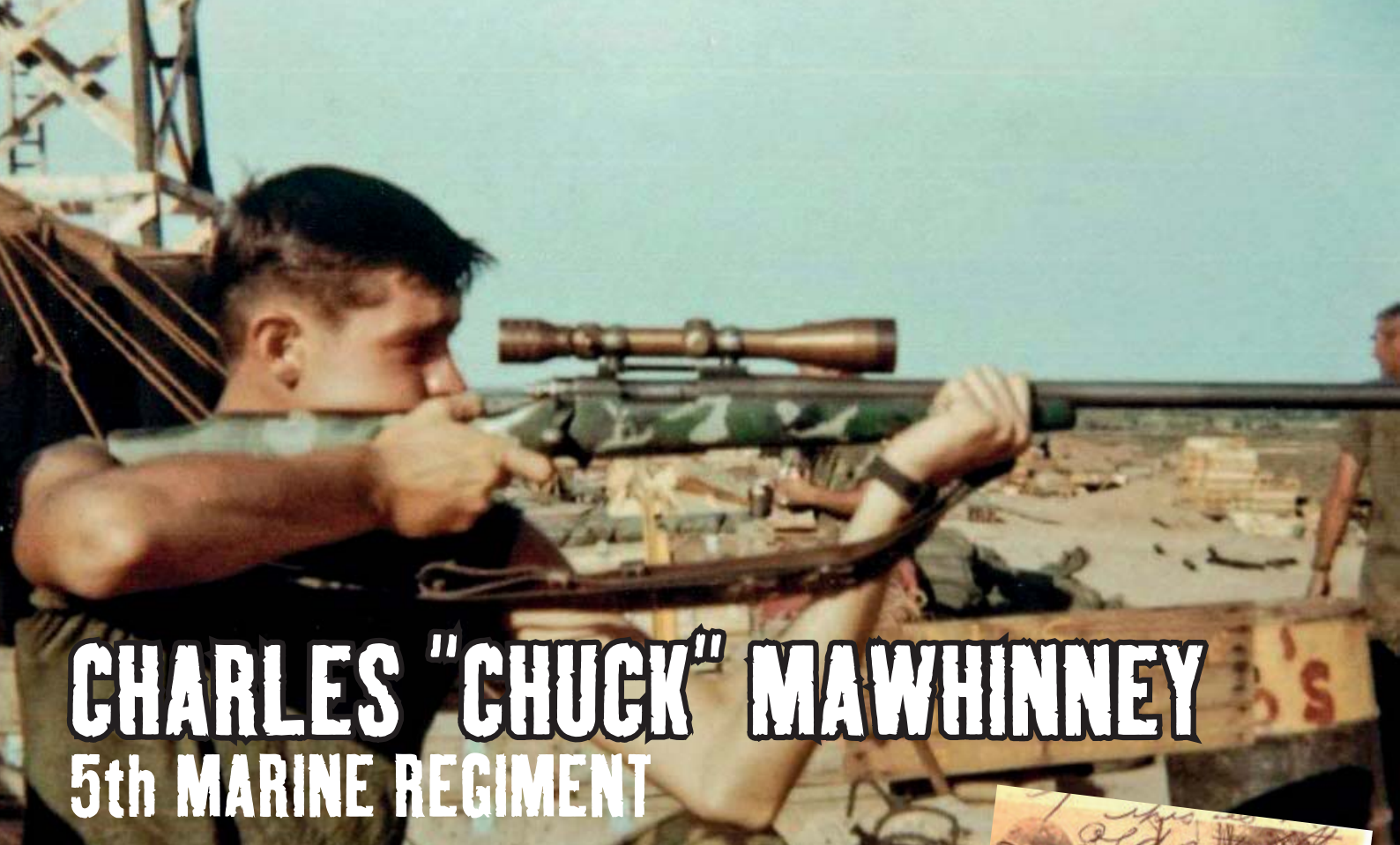
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CHARLES "CHUCK" MAWHINNEY

5th MARINE REGIMENT

SNIPER ONE, DAN MILLS, WRITES ABOUT THE USMC SNIPER THAT HOLDS THE RECORD FOR THE MOST CONFIRMED KILLS – A NUMBER THAT IS LESS THAN HALF HIS TOTAL TALLY.

CHUCK MAWHINNEY IS THE UNITED STATES Marines Corps holder of the most confirmed sniper kills, his tally stands at 103 with a staggering 216 more "probable kills" – i.e. kills that couldn't be witnessed and therefore "confirmed" at the time of shooting!



Chuck was born in Oregon in the USA in 1949, the son of a Second World War Veteran also of the USMC, he grew up a prolific game hunter of recognisable skill. He graduated in '67 and as soon as the deer hunting season had finished for the year he enlisted, following his father into the USMC. Training was conducted and he passed out of the Scout Sniper School at Camp Pendleton in April '68, a month later he went to Vietnam, where once more he began to hunt.

Chuck was deployed to Vietnam for a long sixteen months in May 1968 and by the end of his time there (unbeknown to him until the late nineties), he would become one of America's highest scoring snipers in combat.

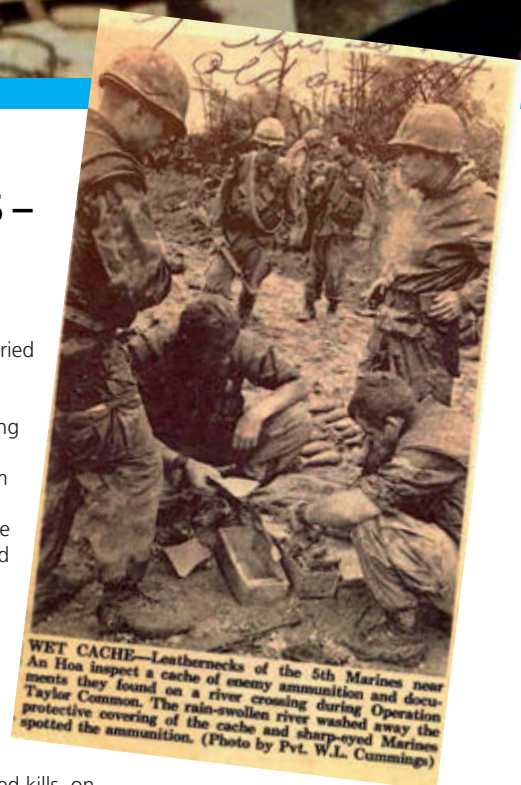
Chuck Mawhinney was a private man, he completed his time and dutifully returned home to Lakeview in Oregon and said nothing of what he had experienced. He spent the remainder of his working career in the forestry service, working

outside. Chuck was married to Robin and lived and worked as part of the small community, drinking beer and chewing the fat, whilst all around him talked of war stories he remained silent saying he was lucky to have missed the draft.

Things stayed that way until a book was written a quarter of a century later, in it he was "outed".

In the book it was written that he had scored 101 confirmed kills, on investigation though it was discovered as more, even Chuck himself did not know his final tally until then. The local populace in his homeland had no idea that this quiet, private and unassuming character they knew so well, or thought they did, was a hunter of such distinction.

Once the story grew Chuck had no option but to start talking and he sure had some amazing stories to tell. Funnily enough those around him at the bar once telling non-stop war stories suddenly had nothing to say! Mawhinney soon got the taste for





"IF THEY HAD A WEAPON, THEY WERE GOING DOWN! SIMPLE!"

it though, these are some quotes he told at the time to a reporter for the LA Times; "It was the ultimate hunting trip: a man hunting another man who was hunting me," and "Don't talk to me about hunting lions or elephants; they don't fight back with rifles and scopes. I just loved it."

The primary weapon Chuck and the other snipers used was a modified M40 bolt action rifle, later fitted with the Redfield 3-9 Accu-Range Scope, firing a standard 7.62 51 mm NATO round. Chuck hand-painted the rifle's stock into the local camouflage in the areas he worked. For night time firing he used the standard M14 rifle but on semi-automatic, fitted with a Starlight Night Vision Scope. To keep the scope dry he employed an old hunter's trick; using a piece of rubber from a tyre inner tube to keep the rain off. The majority of shots fired were engaged in the 300 to 700 yard bracket and, due to the nature of the terrain operated in, mostly from the sitting position.

Like most snipers Chuck hated all the "bull" of barrack rom life and excelled in the bush where he felt at home, often spending weeks there unshaven and dressed how he liked. After several weeks of this he would have to shave with his Ka-Bar knife to clean himself up a bit before getting back into camp.

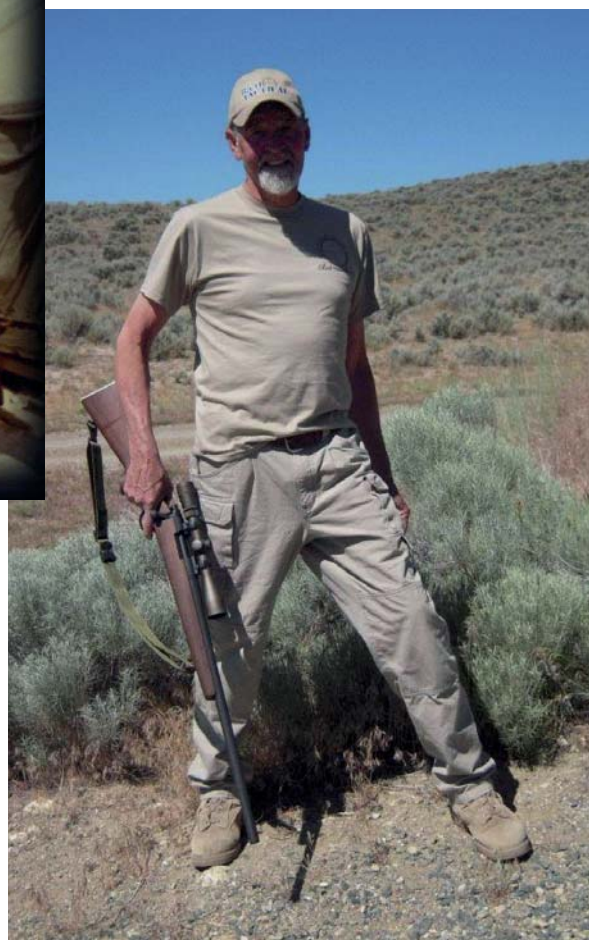
One of the most staggering incidents Chuck talked about was a contact during which he killed 16 NVA enemy soldiers trying to cross a river at night, on Valentine's Day in 1969.

A young, burly black youth from Philadelphia City, called Bob "Sugar Bear" Bryant, acted as his spotter. Intel had come in that a large force of North Vietnamese Army were moving into the area. Chuck Mawhinney was said to know the terrain like a wolf and approached the Commanding Officer with a plan; he knew an area of low level water where he was sure the enemy would try to ford the otherwise deeper river, there he could set up an ambush.

At first a reluctant CO denied permission but Chuck eventually persuaded him otherwise, every effort counted because there was no air or artillery support available and it was estimated the enemy numbers would be of Battalion to Regimental size, against his unit of 125.

The sniper scout pair infiltrated the area and set up a fire position in a part of the river bank that had become eroded by constant water eddying against it. Observation was very good due to a storm overhead with regular sheet lightning so they hunkered down and waited, not for long. Shortly after setting up an enemy scout appeared in the long grass on the opposite bank and they watched as he entered the water and started to cross, only his head showed above the water.

The enemy scout was checking out the crossing point. He stopped before reaching the opposite bank, the side of the snipers, there he took a look about for a short time only feet away from



where they lay, then returned back in the direction he had come.

Sure enough, shortly after he disappeared he returned with many others, leading the way across the river. Sniper Chuck Mawhinney opened fire time and again, each time he pulled the trigger an enemy soldier splashed dead into the waters embrace with a bullet in the head. Chuck fired sixteen times and shot sixteen NVA through the head – sixteen headshots!

The enemy kept on coming until all of a sudden they stopped and returned the way they had come, it was a crying shame that no artillery support was available at the time.

Chuck wasn't the type to doubt and let live to fight another day, if the enemy had a rifle, they were shot. One time whilst on perimeter over watch (and he has a Kodak photo to prove it) the pair were watching what they thought was a farmer working the rice paddies. Sugar Bear said "Chuck he is hiding a rifle in the long grass," and bam! That's it... he's dead. When they approached his body they found that he had been making a detailed sketch map of their whole unit position.

At the end of his time in the Nam, a priest said Sergeant Chuck Mawhinney was suffering from combat fatigue so he was sent back to the States. For a time he continued to serve as a rifle instructor back in Camp Pendleton, until his release in 1970.

After his discharge up until his retirement in the late 1990's Chuck worked at the Forestry Service, in this latter period, once his secret was out, he made up for lost time and became a regular on the speaker circuit and shooting shows, as well as having a knife named after him and a personalised version of his M40 made – 103 of them in fact, to match his tally!





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FOOTBALL IN WW1



WE HAVE ALL HEARD ABOUT FOOTBALL BEING PLAYED DURING THE SO CALLED CHRISTMAS TRUCE IN NO MAN'S LAND 1914 BUT DAN MILLS ASKS "WHAT HAPPENED DURING THOSE WAR YEARS TO FOOTBALL?"

WELL, IN A NUTSHELL, THOUGH MANY footballers rushed to join up along with hundreds of their fans following them, the League and National games still went on, initially.

Whether you believe or not that a proper game of football was held between German and British players in between the trench lines some football certainly took place, some games had no limits to numbers and played with a tin of bully beef or an old deflated leather football, whilst others had properly marked goals and the correct numbers of players.

In 1915 the FA even received a letter from interned British civilian prisoners held in a German POW camp, imploring them to send out a ball, it was recorded in the minutes.

At Spurs many of the team members joined up, all choosing to serve in a Royal Engineer unit. They enlisted together, fought together and in eleven cases, a whole teams worth, they died together.

The first whole team to join up was at Clapton (now Leyton) Orient, where so many of them joined up they were called the Footballers Battalion! Team Captain Fred Parker enlisted and forty players and staff followed him, all joining 17th Battalion the Middlesex Regiment.

1915 even held the FA

Cup as normal, though it moved location from London to Sheffield to avoid any problems! The match was between Sheffield and Chelsea and was billed as the "Khaki Final". Sheffield won 3 goals to nil.

The League had been expanding over the years, to a total of 40 clubs for the 05-06 season, it remained at that level until competitive football was suspended because of the war. This happened after the season in 14-15 although, unofficially, a wartime football league played on. Back then the game was dominated by clubs from the Midlands and the North of England, Sheffield Wednesday, Aston Villa, Newcastle United and Sunderland; all won three or more league titles in the period leading up to World War I. At the end of the 1914-1915 season Everton topped the League First Division, with Oldham Athletic in second place and in third, Blackburn Rovers. Sheffield United won the FA Cup for the third time and the FA Cup was then also



“AT SPURS MANY OF THE TEAM MEMBERS JOINED UP, ALL CHOOSING TO SERVE IN A ROYAL ENGINEER UNIT. THEY ENLISTED TOGETHER, FOUGHT TOGETHER AND IN ELEVEN CASES, A WHOLE TEAMS WORTH, THEY DIED TOGETHER.”

suspended until after the War had ended.

Not all who played the game hung up their boots to join the colours, some players continued on for one reason or another. William “Billy” Walker of Aston Villa was considered one of the best players to play the game and to this day he still holds the record of being the only player to have scored a hat trick of penalties in a league game. In his career he scored 214 goals for Aston Villa and 9 for England and is still Villa’s all-time top goal scorer. Other notable accomplishments are that he was the first Englishman to score at Wembley Stadium, against Scotland in 1924 and he won the FA cup twice; once as a player for Aston Villa and once as a manager for Sheffield Wednesday, beating his beloved Villa on route!

Leigh Roose was a Welsh International, playing in goal for several teams and had 144 appearances for Stoke City. Back then the ball was much heavier than it weighs today but Leigh could kick it the whole length and punch it over the halfway line! After joining up with these skills he became a recognised “bomb thrower” and was awarded the Military Medal in his very first action. Each soldier would carry two “Mills” bombs in their battledress pockets and hand them to a course qualified “Bomber”, who would then throw them. Aged 38, near the end of the Battle of the Somme Leigh Roose was killed and his body was never recovered.

Whilst most men were away the women were left to take over where men left off and they were soon at work in the fields and factories. In all areas of “male only” or “male-dominated” employments, females filled the gaps and this included pastimes – including football teams too.

A Preston team, Captained by young Lilly Parr, began playing to raise money for war charities. Their game became so popular it raised much needed cash and by 1917 over 53,000 fans were watching them play at Goodison Park! They enjoyed playing so much that after the wars end many such teams were very reluctant to give up playing sport and go back to how things were.

One Celtic hero who played for the said team won the Victoria Cross; at wars outbreak he immediately left Celtic FC and enlisted. During the fighting in 1915, Willie Angus noticed an injured comrade trying to shelter under a German-held bunker. He was begging for water but received grenades, so Willie went out to collect him and carried him back. He was hit over forty times by the Germans, losing one eye and a foot in the process. He lived but never played again.

Day One of the Somme, as we know, was an absolute disaster for the British, one unit though (to help the soldiers through) had a novel idea. The 8th Battalion East Surrey Regiment lined up with four footballs to kick across No Man’s Land and “score” by kicking the ball into the enemy trenches. Unfortunately many were killed, others though kicked the ball all the way across and into the objective which was taken, led by Captain Billy Neville. Sadly Billy was killed



just short of the German front lines.

Here is a short poem from *The Daily Mail* written about the time:

“On through the hail of slaughter, Where gallant comrades fall,

Where blood is poured like water, They drive the trickling ball,

The fear of death before them, Is but an empty name,

True to the land that bore them, The Surreys played the game.”

Another footballer turned VC winner was Bradford Park Avenue’s Donald Bell, a defender. Donald joined in November 1914 and set sail for France only two days after he was wed in 1915. During bitter fighting on July 5th 1916, at the Battle of the Somme Bell won the Victoria Cross for outstanding bravery. He stuffed his pockets full of bombs, crept up on an enemy machine gun nest and destroyed it by first shooting the gunner dead then throwing in a bomb.

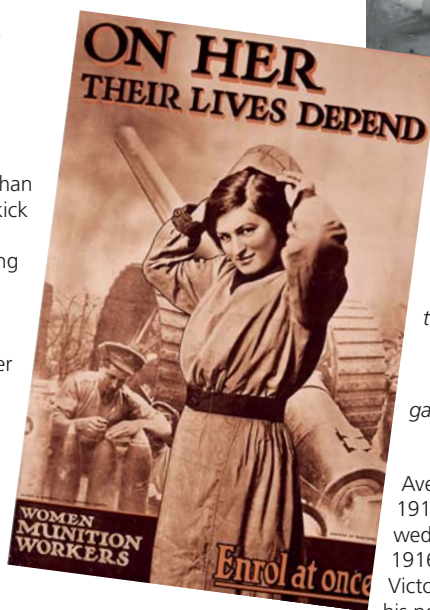
In a letter home to his Mother he wrote “I must confess that it was the biggest fluke alive and I did nothing. I only chucked the bomb and it did the trick!” Unfortunately this success led to his death, when only five days after the first action he died attempting something similar.

After the war’s end, the League that had been suspended for four seasons resumed play. The 1919 season saw some expansion within the First and Second Divisions, to 22 teams a piece. In those early years after the war West Bromwich Albion (1919–20) and Burnley (1920–21), both teams from amongst the original 12 clubs, won their first-ever titles (in Albion’s case this still stands as their only title to date).

■ There have been many accounts of a football match taking place between the warring sides, during an unofficial truce at Xmas, with some doubting that such a thing could have happened.

Company-Sergeant Major Frank Naden of the 6th Cheshire Territorials was interviewed by the Evening Mail, Newcastle while in Stockport for a week’s leave. He told the paper:

“On Christmas Day one of the Germans came out of the trenches and held his hands up. Our fellows immediately got out of theirs, and we met in the middle, and for the rest of the day we fraternised, exchanging food, cigarettes and souvenirs. The Germans gave us some of their sausages, and we gave them some of our stuff. The Scotsmen started the bagpipes and we had a rare old jollification, which included football in which the Germans took part. The Germans expressed themselves as being tired of the war and wished it was over. They greatly admired our equipment and wanted to exchange jack knives and other articles. Next day we got an order that all communication and friendly intercourse with the enemy must cease but we did not fire at all that day, and the Germans did not fire at us.” (Evening Mail, Newcastle, December 31st, 1914)



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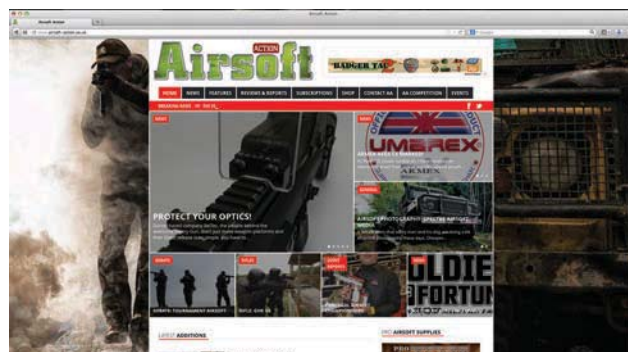
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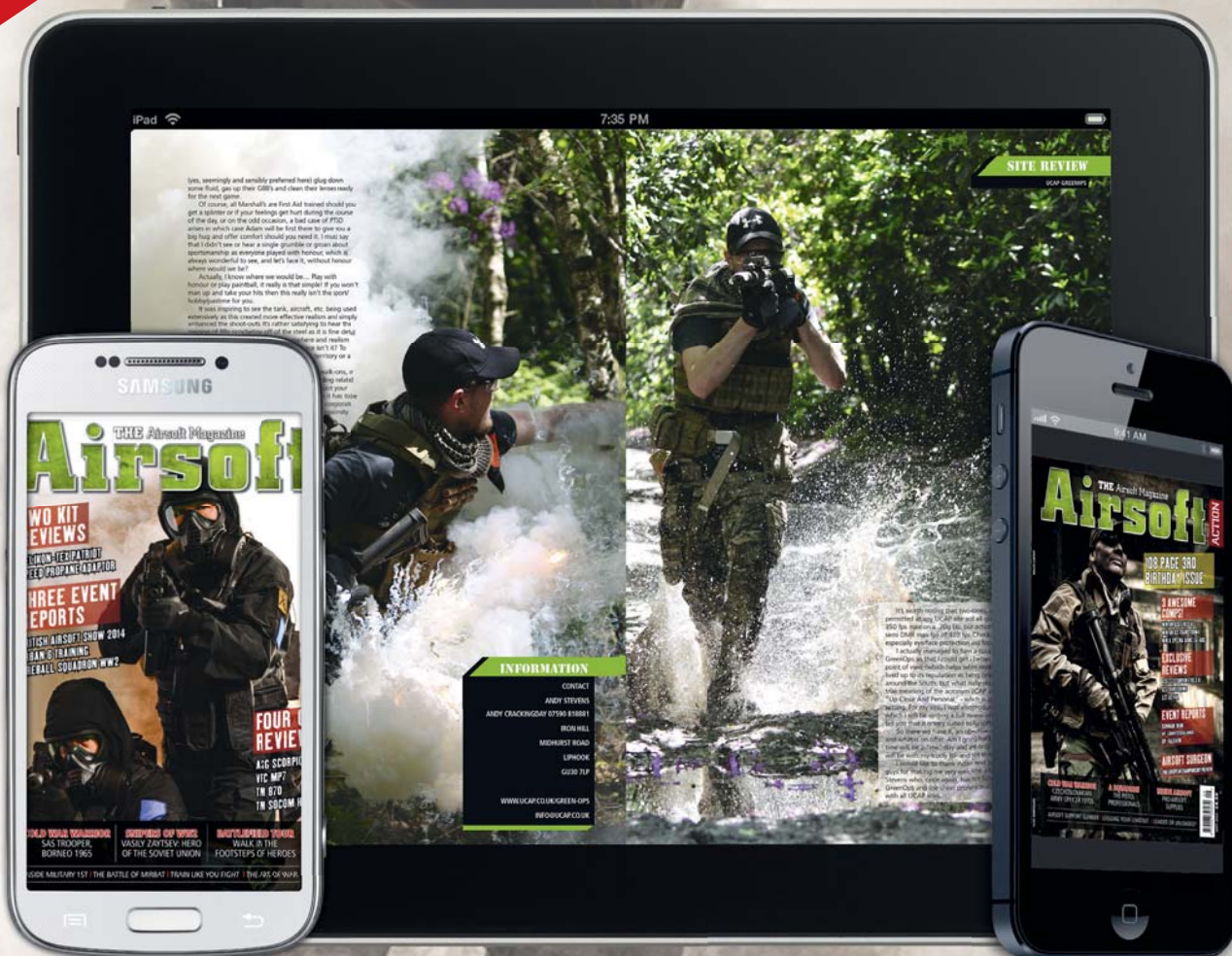
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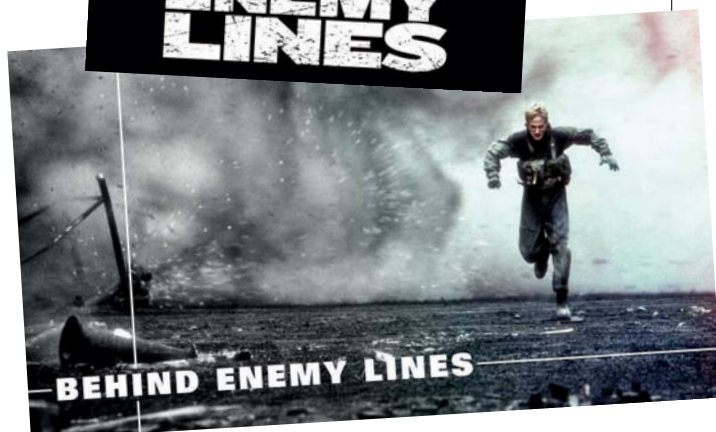


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RUN (INTO THE) FOREST... RUN!

TO ESCAPE THE POST-XMAS BLOAT AND EVADE ANY MORE EXCESS WEIGHT, BILLY GETS HIS RUNNING SHOES ON – AND THAT GETS HIM THINKING...



RUNNING HAS ALWAYS BEEN QUITE a big part of my life, for as long as I can remember actually. Having become thoroughly fed up with getting knocked about as a kid, I switched off rugby and took up X Country instead which was infinitely preferable.

But as we all know when we get older (and the carefree days of childhood are a distant memory), work, life, money, families and other boring routine stuff that seems so important gets in the way of fitness training for everybody, even the most single-minded and dedicated part time athletes.

There was an interesting article I read not long ago, about the fact that the whole running/fitness magazine thing was all just a massive con designed to part us from our £££ because, at the end of the day running is free; all you have to do is buy some trainers, PT kit and run.

That got me thinking (not about this article) but I did think the author had a point and I vowed from that moment on never to buy another fitness mag or guide again. I'm going to buy super cool Airsoft kit instead Yeeehhaaa!! Anyway I digress (Ed will be on the phone).

Partly as a result of the aforementioned factors, I discovered that I'm not as fit and agile as I should be, so as part of realigning my work/life balance (as well as the fact that after Christmas I found it a stretch to do my bloody shoe laces up my belt was so tight), I have recently rediscovered my legs.

I did a little map recce, followed by a walk en famille and have found a fabulous secluded bit of woodland not far from the house, with ditches, hills and tracks spread all over it like a spiders web and now I get out every lunch time that I am working from home – and it's absolutely glorious.

I have invested in a swanky new Suunto heart rate monitor GPS thingamejig (Cotswold vouchers are a brilliant Birthday/Christmas solution for the folks, especially if you time it right with the post-Xmas sales), which informs me when a heart attack is waiting for me at the top of the ridge I am scrambling up and I am busily scribbling it all down on a spread sheet when I get home to track my progress.



Anyway there I was the other day caning (well alright trotting, huffing and puffing – but it felt like caning! Gimme a break ok?) it around the hill on my own, trying to put work out of my head for that hour, but at the same time wondering what I was going to deliver to Ed this month. And then it came to me; running is fun, relaxing and good for the soul – but running when you’re being pursued by people who will kick the stuffing out of you when/if they catch you, who are well rested, fed and equipped and are on your tail is not... Not one little bit!

Escape & Evasion training, or E&E, is an important part of selection and training for lots of different units, from Special Forces to Air Crew and Pilots, as well as Dispatchers who throw kit out of aircraft to their comrades on the ground doing the fighting. It not only teaches students the skills they will need during the actual training but also tests candidates to see if they have the temperament for this kind of work. It can be a “pass fail” and it’s definitely not for everyone. Anyone whose job involves a risk of dropping behind enemy lines, be that on purpose or as a result of an accident, needs this kind of training.

The programme usually begins with some basic survival training where the students are taught how to make shelters, how to live off the land, to improvise and use what little resources they are left with (or can find or scavenge), to make themselves as comfy as possible and to keep them going – be that “alive” so they can be recovered, or “fit” so they can continue to evade capture.

They’ll then go into more detail about sourcing water, eating all manner of unpleasant stuff that natives of other countries consider staple part of their diets but we aren’t used to. They’ll be given advice on the sort of kit to take with them when they deploy. I remember a Hercules Pilot who on being told to turn up for the training carrying what he’d normally take on the plane (everybody else had sensibly decanted the contents of their suitcases into day sacks for the exercise), rocking up with a pink Samsonite suitcase. At the end of the day he wasn’t a soldier and that was what he carried, although he regretted it after a few days on the run with it.

Improvised navigation plays a big part too, using the stars to tell which way is south (and I don’t mean phoning up George Clooney to ask him as some wag stated once), as well as things like which way the prevailing winds are blowing, which way the major rivers flow when you’re standing on their banks. All these things can help you tell that you’re going in the right direction.

After the training it’ll be time to test all they’ve learnt on a realistic exercise. You’re dropped off somewhere (possibly with no

idea of where you are) with a very rough sketch map and have to transit through a series of rendezvous points to get to safety. Then a few hours after you’ve set off the enemy will be let loose on your tail.

Now, you might think that it can’t compare to the real thing and it’s of limited training value because you know at the end of the day that you’re not going to have your toenails pulled out if you get caught, but you’d be quite wrong. Something very primitive kicks in when you’re being pursued (even on an exercise) and believe me when I tell you, that when the enemy is circling an area where you’re concealed, you’re certain they know you’re in there and you can hear dogs, your heart will be banging away in your rib cage like you’ve never heard it before!

Many hunter forces will have dog teams with them, which will aid them in tracking you. The dogs are doing what comes naturally to them but there is a weakness in the partnership between handler and dog which you can use to your advantage – if you’re aware of it.

Dogs have an incredibly sensitive nose and can read the ground and scent signals in a way that we find very difficult to comprehend. To a dog the ground is literally awash with what must be the most tantalizing mix of stories, colours, threads, personalities and other stuff that must be an enormous distraction. So picture the scene, the handler is in an O Group and he’s told that they are to search this area of wood or land for a load of soldiers...

Off the handler and his dog go in hot pursuit, with a protection group of soldiers right on their backs to grab you and fill you in once the dog and handler have tracked you down. You can hear them gaining on you, they’re just a few kilometres away, you’re in a weakened state as you’ve been living rough for over a week with



“TO A DOG THE GROUND IS LITERALLY AWASH WITH WHAT MUST BE THE MOST TANTALIZING MIX OF STORIES, COLOURS, THREADS, PERSONALITIES AND OTHER STUFF.”



little or no food and unless you try and shake them off they're bound to catch you.

Here's your opportunity to use your secret knowledge to stop the team from following you. Your aim is to make the tracker lose faith in the dog, you need to make him think that the dog is following the scent of rabbits, other dogs or is just out nosing around. Dogs are just like people, they will eventually get bored with what they're doing and so something else but the difference is that the tracker won't know what the dog's following, so we need to convince him that the dog's off your scent and just doing his own thing – and here's how...

If you come across a river, wade across it, get out the other side then get back in, wade a distance and then get out again. The tracker (because he's human and doesn't like wet feet, unlike his dog who doesn't care) will start to get aggravated with this constant crossing and re-crossing and question his four legged companion. A while later he'll come across a fence and the dog will indicate that it wants to cross, so he'll lift it over and over he'll go too. The dog will run along the fence for 20 metres and then indicate that he wants to go back over, the tracker will curse and lift him back over... I think you get the pattern here, don't you?

Before long our tracker and the soldiers who are following the pooch will be mumping at 50 words/minute and will have stopped and turned around, convinced that the dog is off scent. The lure of a hot brew and change of socks back at the 4 Tonne will be too much and you'll be free of them... for the moment.

So there you have it. Have a think about that the next time you're loping around the park and it might lift your heart rate a bit. It works for me.

Keep safe Y'all!
Billy Out.



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LIVING IN THE FIELD

WILL FOWLER USES HIS EXPERIENCE TO GIVE US SOME BASIC TIPS ON SETTING UP A SAFE AND COMFORTABLE HARBOUR AREA.



“A VETERAN TOLD ME, ‘GOOD SOLDIERS ARE ACTUALLY CONSERVATIONISTS TRYING AS FAR AS POSSIBLE TO LEAVE THE COUNTRYSIDE EXACTLY AS THEY FOUND IT.’”

IT'S THE END OF THE DAY; limbs ache, the bergen seems a lot heavier than it did this morning, you could do with a brew and so now the search is on for a harbour area for the night.

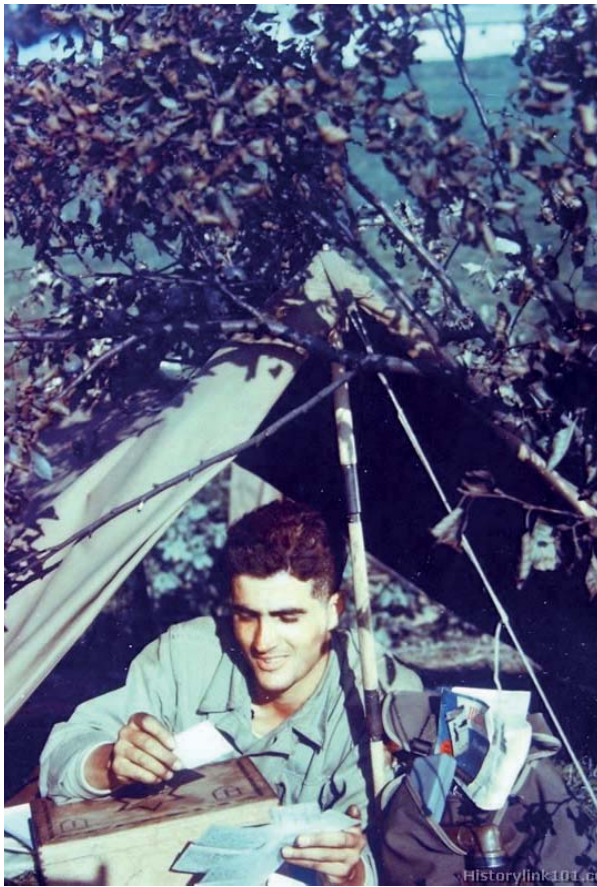
There is a temptation to find the first level ground before last light, plonk down your kit, get a brew going, sort out sleeping quarters and the guard stag for the night ahead and crash out. However a little thought about where you will be sleeping before you settle in can be vital.

Experience has shown that in hilly or mountainous terrain a covert harbour, or lying up area is best selected from a point half way up a feature. Anyone hunting you will be looking for locations at the top of a hill since this is tactically sound, or at the bottom where the going is easier and there is probably a supply of water. Half way up is less obvious.

Equally, where the ground is level there is a temptation to site a harbour next to water. Running water is generally reckoned to be healthier than still or slow moving water, however the sound can mask other noises, so a position some distance from the stream or creek is more tactically sound. Hostile forces searching an area will often use the river line as a starting point. Still water attracts insects and wind and rain can blow across it into your location. Even if there is no human threat, an overnight stay by a river can be hazardous if there is a heavy downpour and the river level rises quickly. Another reason why a valley is a bad choice is that it can be a cold air trap and is likely to have heavy dew in the morning.

So the hide area has been selected. The next thing is to get sentries out to cover all the approaches and make sure that they are sufficiently far away that they cannot hear the hide being set up - this means that any approaching hostiles can be seen by the sentry before they hear any give-away sounds. The other give-away is smell.

During the Vietnam War it was said that the smell of soap was an indicator the US troops were in the area. US Long Range



Reconnaissance Patrols (LRRPs), operating deep behind North Vietnamese lines, would stop washing days before an insertion operation to ensure that they did not smell of soap. In the still air in woodland or jungle the smell of cooking and cigarette smoke can hang in the air long after the food has been eaten or the cigarette smoked and is a dead giveaway that someone has been there.

Your shelter and sleeping position should be set up before last light and food cooked and eaten. Ration packs come with packaging and care must be taken to ensure that give away wrappers and packaging are not left on the ground. Wrappers and food rubbish are an invaluable source of intelligence - they will indicate the nationality, morale, discipline and strength of a unit. Nationality is obvious (the writing on the packaging will be in English, French, German etc.) but how about indicating the morale, discipline and strength of the unit?

Poorly concealed or discarded wrappers, or worse, discarded ammunition shows that the unit has low morale and poor discipline. The position and quantity will give an indication of its strength and there is a fair chance that if it is returning to base, it will be prepared to dump unused rations or unpopular items from the ration pack. However, when setting out on patrol it will play safe and hang onto everything.

In a covert Observation Post (OP) food will be eaten cold so there are no smells and, everything - everything, including human waste - will be bagged up and removed. As a veteran told me, "good soldiers are actually conservationists trying as far as possible to leave the countryside exactly as they found it."

There are some excellent light weight, low profile tents on the market that are constructed from breathable, neutral or camouflaged fabrics (where there is a low threat level these are ideal), however if you have to man a stand-to position in a hurry, struggling out of a sleeping bag and a tent can cost vital seconds. It is here that our old friend the "basha" comes into its own.

"Basha" is Malay for shelter and entered the British and Commonwealth military vocabulary during the Malayan Emergency of 1950-1959. It is normally constructed from a waterproof poncho, though the larger Australian Army Hoochie sheet with loops along its edges gives better cover, although it is bulkier.

Until elastic bungees came on the market bashas were constructed with paracord and tent pegs. The cords were tied with quick release knots so that the basha could be dropped to ground quickly and bungees have made life a lot easier and quicker. The light weight versions are ideal for making a basha with a few aluminium pegs used to secure corners to the ground. The basha should be as low as is practical to the ground but stretched out at a slight angle sloping to the rear, which allows rain water to drain off. An elementary mistake is failing to tie the hood tightly to ensure that water does not pool inside it - it can be a very nasty experience to wake up in the middle of the night with a hood full of cold rain water dumped in the middle of your sleeping bag!

Bivi bags made from breathable materials have made living in the field a lot easier - however a bivi bag can restrict a quick exit from a sleeping bag, so it is important to select your bag properly. The combination of bivvy bag and basha can make for a warm dry night in some of the grimmest of weather - mind you it's foul packing up in the morning!

The golden rule when siting a basha is to look up and look down... Look up into trees for dead or broken branches that could fall if the wind picks up and down for patterns in leaf litter or soil, formed by water runoff in bad weather. Wheel ruts on tracks also form very effective water channels. Ideally choose a flat, level piece of ground. In the days before close cell foam mats or air mattresses, the next drill was to collect dry bracken as a mattress and dig out a shallow trough in the soil to accommodate your hip.

As you sort out your kit and sleeping area there is a temptation to unload everything from your bergen, a bit like unpacking in a hotel room. Resist it. If you have packed your bergen correctly your rations, a radio battery and spare ammunition will be near the top or in the side pockets, with the sleeping bag at the bottom. Take out what you need; use it and stow it back in the bergen. If you need to bug out in a hurry and sleeping bag, rations and other impedimenta are scattered around you will lose them as you leg it. If they are in your bergen it is simply a case of grab it and run!

One useful trick is to have a day sack containing essentials stowed inside the larger Bergen, the space around it can be filled with items like spare clothing. This means that you do not need to take the side pouches off your bergen to make up a day pack.

Depending on how long you are in the field rations can be heated up on a gas camping stove or issue solid fuel stove. Bear in mind that while re-supply will bring up issue kit, it will not supply you with items that you have privately purchased. Fancy light-weight cookers and torches etc. are great for a few days in the field but you may well have to depend on issue kit. It is valuable therefore to learn how to use it well before you are miles away from home comforts.



Before last light you need to have eaten and a track plan be in place. The track plan is important for two reasons; it ensures that there is a minimal disruption to vegetation and undergrowth and so makes the site harder to locate from the air. It also means that you can move quickly and quietly around the position.

Finally, a night time routine is established. As the sun sets you occupy your stand to positions - where you would be in the event of an attack. The transition from stand to, to stand down from last light to darkness marks the end of the day and the beginning of the night time routine.

At the end of all this it's a case of "Good night campers"... though you all know that it won't be eight hours of dreamless sleep - there will be two hour guard stags and the inevitable pre-dawn stand to...

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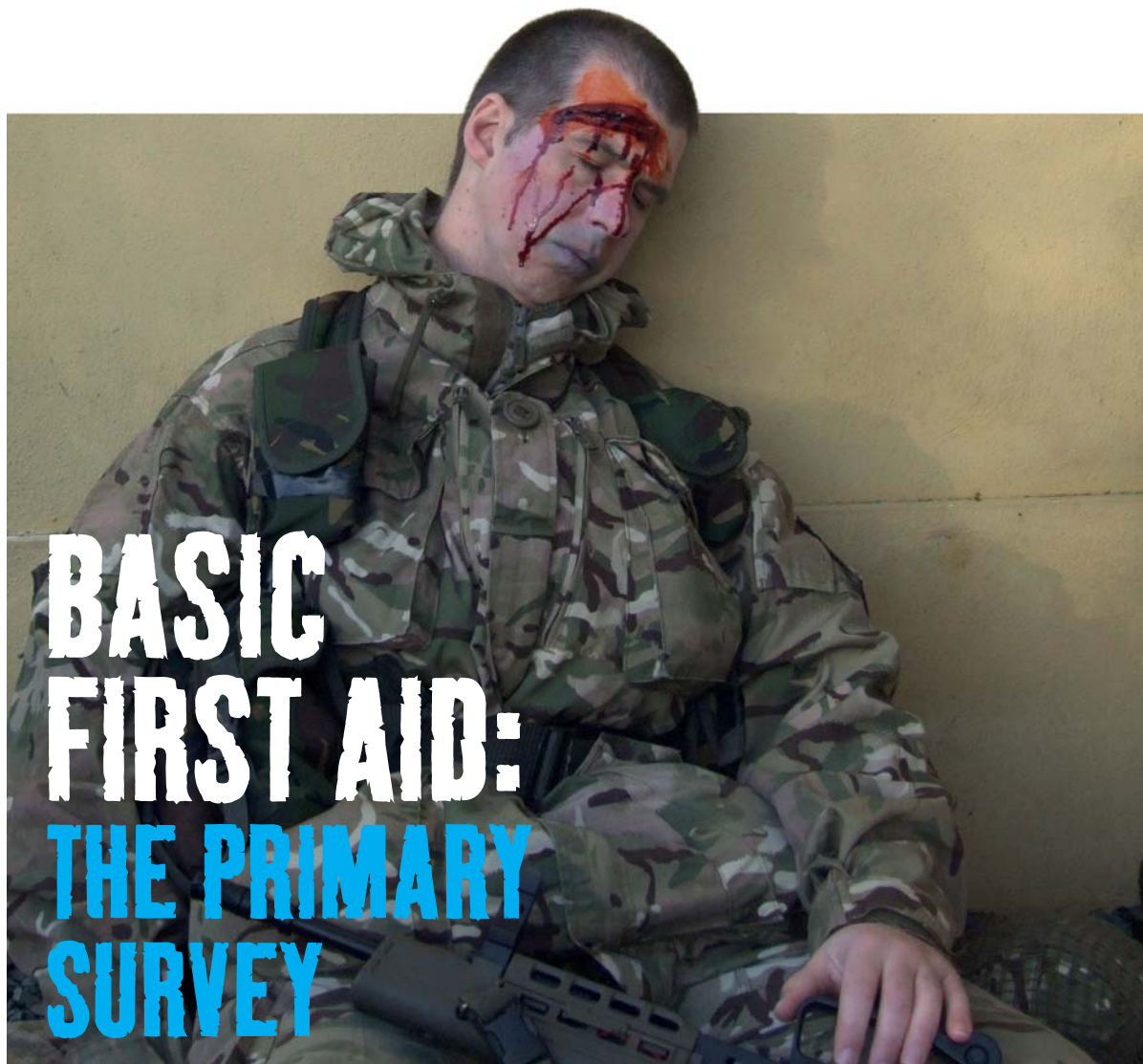
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SURVIVAL EXPERT AND AIRSOFTER, PAUL YELLAND, WRITES ABOUT THE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP A DOWNED PLAYER BEFORE QUALIFIED MEDICAL CARE ARRIVES.

HAVING A KNOWLEDGE OF FIRST AID is useful for anybody, especially those who spend their weekends running around and playing soldiers. Airsoft events tend to be well run with marshals and qualified first aiders on hand to deal with any injuries. But with some skirmish sites covering vast areas, if you or one of your team members are taken ill or become injured, then it may be some time before a first aider can get to you.

Before I go any further, I must stress that I am not a qualified first aid instructor but what I do have, is many years of experience in providing emergency pre-hospital care. The information contained in this article is up to date but will not supplement the need for people to attend a first aid course.

PRIORITIES

Emergency situations can cause chaos and panic, so it is useful to have a mental check list to help you deal with the incident in a safe and methodical way. This is called "the primary survey" and it is the first aider's immediate actions upon arriving at any incident. If you only remember one piece of advice from this article then let it be this... **DR ABC**. This stands for:

- **DANGER**
- **RESPONSE**
- **AIRWAY**
- **BREATHING**
- **CIRCULATION**

Regardless of your medical grade, "DR ABC" is the fundamental tool used to prioritise the order of treatment given to a casualty, with any life threatening issues being identified and addressed first. If you fail to address these priorities of treatment in order and you become side-tracked into dealing with a less important issue over a life threatening one, then the patient could deteriorate or even die. So, let's look closer at each point in turn.

"IF YOU ONLY REMEMBER ONE PIECE OF ADVICE FROM THIS ARTICLE THEN LET IT BE THIS... DR ABC."

DANGER

Only a fool would rush in to a situation which they do not fully understand, so check that it is safe for you to approach the casualty. If there is a hazard and it is safe for you to do so, then remove the danger away from the casualty. If the hazard cannot be removed, then the casualty needs to be moved away from the source of danger. Sometimes casualties will be inaccessible, such as after a fall from cliffs – **DO NOT** put yourself at risk by attempting rescue. These situations will require specialist rescue teams to access the casualty. If the incident has occurred during a skirmish, then it is really important to stop the shooting and to remove magazines from weapons, make them safe and inform a marshal.

RESPONSE

Talk to the casualty as you approach them. If they look up and reply to you, then that is your answer – they are alert. However, if you get no response from them, try shouting. If there is still no response, then gently shake the casualty's shoulders. If there is no verbal or eye response after this, then the casualty is unconscious.

AIRWAY

"Airway, airway, airway!" That was the rant which I was on the receiving end of, one day during my initial ambulance service training. If the patient does not have a clear and well managed airway, then they will die – it is as simple as that! So if you ask the casualty a question and they reply normally, then it is acceptable to assume that their airway is okay and is self-maintained at that time of assessment. But, if the casualty deteriorates and becomes unconscious, then they are no longer able to protect their own airway, so therefore are at risk of the airway becoming blocked. If you hear gurgling or a snoring noise coming from an unconscious casualty, then they are certainly in trouble.

The airway on an unconscious casualty needs to be cleared of any obstruction and "opened". To do this first open the mouth, check inside it and remove any debris. Once the airway has been cleared of any obstructions, put one of your hands on to their forehead and your other hand underneath their chin and gently tilt the head back whilst lifting their chin (head tilt/chin lift). By carrying out this procedure, you are moving the relaxed tongue away from the top of the airway. On its own, this can be a life-saving technique but once done it has to be maintained, otherwise there is a risk that the airway will close again. After carrying out the head tilt/chin lift, any snoring or gurgling noises which were being made by the casualty should have improved or stopped completely, allowing for unobstructed breathing.

Opening an Airway**BREATHING**

Once the airway has been cleared and opened, you will need to check and see if the casualty is breathing. To do this **LOOK, LISTEN, FEEL**.

Look at the chest to see if it is rising and falling. Listen carefully for any breathing sounds that the casualty could be making by placing the side of your face/ear above their mouth. Also note if the breathing effort is distressed, slow or fast. Also feel the chest to see if it is moving. Check for ten seconds before deciding that breathing is absent. If the casualty is not breathing, call 999 straight away and commence resuscitation (see CPR). If they are breathing, then they will also have a pulse, so continue to maintain their airway and move on to the next step.

CIRCULATION

The casualty should be quickly checked for any severe external bleeding which should be controlled by applying field dressings, direct pressure, and if possible, elevation of the injured part.

RECOVERY POSITION

Unconscious casualties who have a pulse and are breathing should not be left on their back. If they vomit or are bleeding from the mouth, their airway could become compromised. To prevent this from happening the casualty should be rolled onto their side and placed into the recovery position. For a casualty who is laying on their back, carry out the following:

1. Kneel alongside the casualty
2. Straighten their legs
3. Bend their arm closest to you 90 degrees at the elbow putting the hand by their head (like they are waving)
4. Bring their arm which is furthest away from you across the chest towards you. Put the back of the hand of this arm against their cheek and hold it in position
5. Using your other hand, bend the casualty's leg which is furthest away from you at the knee and use it as a lever to pull the casualty towards you.
6. Make sure that the casualty does not roll onto their stomach. Keep their leg bent out at a right angle to prevent this from happening.
7. Re-check the casualty's airway, making sure it remains open.

The Recovery Position

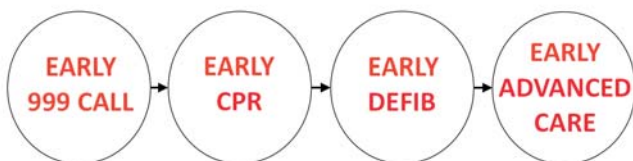
Casualties who are laying on their front or side can be placed into the recovery position by modifying the above technique to achieve the required position. If you suspect that the casualty has sustained a spinal injury then extreme care should be taken when rolling them onto their side. If possible, and there are enough of you, use the log roll technique. This allows the spine to be kept in a straight line as the casualty is being rolled.

CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR)

If a casualty's heart has stopped then they are said to be "in cardiac arrest". Someone who has gone into cardiac arrest will need to receive resuscitation in order to have any chance of survival. The casualty will also require advance life support (ALS), which includes drug therapy and defibrillation. Now, forget what you may have seen on the TV. In real life it is hard work trying to resuscitate someone and there are many factors involved which can affect the outcome of a resuscitation attempt. Even if the heart is restarted pre-hospital, the casualty will remain in a critical condition and could possibly go back into cardiac arrest before being evacuated to hospital.

The aim of basic life support (BLS) is to artificially oxygenate the body's blood and then to pump the oxygenated blood around the body. By doing this, the vital organs (heart, lungs and brain) are kept oxygenated whilst you await the arrival of the paramedics, who will then perform ALS. The longer that a casualty is deprived of oxygen, the less chance there is of a successful resuscitation. In a cardiac arrest, the casualty has more chance of living if the immediate care which they receive follows the "chain of survival" algorithm.

THE CHAIN OF SURVIVAL



There are slight differences between the techniques for baby, child and adult BLS. Here, I am going to cover the adult BLS technique which covers the age range from puberty to adulthood.

After establishing that the casualty is unconscious and not breathing, carry out the following:

1. Call for help.
2. Kneel beside the casualty.
3. Put the heel of one of your hands on the breast bone in the centre of the chest.
4. Put your other hand on top of the hand that is touching the chest and inter-join your fingers. The fingers should be held off from the ribs, with only the heel of your hand being in contact with the casualty's chest.
5. Lean over the casualty and lock your arms straight. Now press down on the casualty's chest aiming to compress the chest by 5–6 cm. Allow their chest to spring back up to the normal position.
6. Repeat the chest compressions 30 times at a rate of approximately 100 per minute.
7. Avoid bouncing your hands on and off the chest.
8. Now open the airway by tilting the head and lifting the chin.
9. Pinch the nose closed with your fingers and open their mouth.
10. Put your lips around the casualty's mouth, making sure that there is a good seal and then blow into their mouth for about one second, ensuring that their chest rises. If the chest does not rise, check their airway is open and that you have a good seal around the mouth.
11. Remove your mouth to allow the chest to fall and give a second ventilation.
12. Continue to perform CPR at a ratio of 30 chest compressions to 2 ventilations until help arrives, or there is a sign of recovery.

Adult CPR



1. Put the heel of your hand, in the centre of the casualties chest, and onto their breast bone



2. Put both hands together and interlock your fingers, ensuring the fingers are lifted off the ribs



3. Keep your arms straight and press down on the chest. Let the chest spring back up. Repeat 30 times



4. Move up to the head. Open the airway by lifting the chin and tilting the head.



5. Pinch the nostrils closed and keep one hand under the chin



6. Seal your mouth over the casualties, and blow until the chest rises. Do this twice. Continue CPR at a ratio of 30:2

SEVERE EXTERNAL BLEEDING

Severe external bleeding from a wound is life-threatening. If, as part of your ABC assessment you notice that the casualty is bleeding heavily from a wound, then you need to take immediate action to control the blood loss. If the casualty loses too much blood volume, then they will go into shock. Remember, blood is the transport system carrying oxygen and nutrients around the body. Without adequate amounts of blood, this transport system will start to fail with an eventual drop in blood pressure. When this happens, the body will try to keep the vital organs supplied with blood by diverting it away from other parts such as surface areas, arms and legs. This is why a casualty who is going into shock will feel faint and also look pale in colour. If severe bleeding is not controlled then the patient will bleed to death.

It is important to remember your priorities of treatment – DR ABC. If you are dealing with a casualty where there is no danger and the casualty is unconscious, you must still address any airway and breathing problems before addressing external bleeding (remember - ABC).

Any injuries sustained to the body is known as trauma. Traumatic injuries can be horrific to look at, let alone to try and treat. When faced with a traumatic injury either as the casualty or the first aider, it is important to remain calm. If you are the person attending to the casualty, then use DR ABC to methodically make your assessment. If you find that the casualty is conscious and breathing but has a severe bleed from a wound then carry out the following:

- Keep the casualty calm.
- Expose the wound.
- Check for any foreign objects that might be protruding from the wound.

- If there is nothing sticking out, apply direct pressure over the wound, using a field dressing or some clean, non-fluffy material.
- If there is a foreign object protruding, then do not press on it or try to remove it. Instead, apply pressure to either side of the object.
- If possible, raise the injured part above the level of the heart, maintaining pressure over the dressing.
- Lay the casualty down keeping their head low and legs raised.
- Maintain direct pressure over the wound, and keep the injured part raised.
- If bleeding soaks through the first of the field dressings, then apply a second one over the top (leave the first one in place).
- If the casualty becomes unconscious, re-check their ABC. Resuscitate if necessary, or if they are breathing, place into the recovery position.

Dealing With a Wound



1. Expose the wound and make sure that there are no foreign objects protruding



2. Elevate the wound above the level of the heart



3. Apply a field dressing and press down using direct pressure over the wound



4. Keep the wound elevated and firm direct pressure applied



5. If blood soaks through the first dressing, then apply a second dressing over the top of the first one

SHOCK

Losing large amounts of blood from the body can lead to a condition called hypovolaemic shock. Other injuries such as burns can also cause shock. This is a life-threatening condition and is completely different from the "emotional shock" that you often hear people describe when someone has been upset by a situation. It is important to recognise the signs and symptoms of hypovolaemic shock early. This is because a casualty may be bleeding internally and the only indication that you will have that they are bleeding to death from internal trauma is by recognising these signs and symptoms. There is approximately 5 litres of blood inside the average human body. Losing 0.5 litres will have little

effect but any more than this and the casualty will start to develop the following:

- Pale/sweaty skin.
- Rapid pulse, becoming weak or absent at the wrist (radial pulse).
- Rapid breathing.
- Anxiety.
- Low blood pressure.
- Feeling faint.
- Deteriorating level of consciousness.
- Cardiac arrest.

Every casualty is different, so they might not show all of these signs and symptoms. Also, the order in which the signs and symptoms develop can vary with each patient.

TREATING SHOCK

1. Deal with the cause – controlling bleeding etc.
2. Insulate the casualty from the ground.
3. Lay the casualty down and keep their head low.
4. Raise their legs up higher than the level of their heart.
5. Call 999 for ambulance/rescue services.
6. Loosen any tight clothing such as ties and belts.
7. Keep the casualty warm with blankets.
8. Keep re-assessing their ABC.

DO NOT GIVE THE CASUALTY ANYTHING TO EAT OR DRINK!

DO NOT USE DIRECT HEAT SOURCES (WATER BOTTLES) TO KEEP THE CASUALTY WARM!

Treating Shock



SUMMARY

Having some form of first aid training is essential in this day and age for anyone, regardless of who you are. I have witnessed on many occasions the difference that first aid can make in saving a life. I have also had many people say to me in despair "I just didn't know what to do!"

Well, you do now.

There are various companies and organisations that provide first aid training, including:

St John Ambulance

Telephone: 0844 770 4800 (Training enquiries).

Email: www.sja.org.uk

British Red Cross

Telephone: 0844 871 11 11 (Switchboard).

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I hope you never have to use any of the skills you learn but if you do, just remember... DR ABC!

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THE ODIN MISSION

BY JAMES HOLLAND

IF YOU ENJOYED READING THE "SHARPE" NOVELS THEN YOU WILL PROBABLY ENJOY THESE, AS KRIS ROBERTS FOUND OUT WHEN HE READ THIS FIRST IN THE SERIES BOOK.

"Damn it, Colonel," Morgan had told him, on one of the few field telephones that were working, "I can't muster more men from thin air. Everything we have is thrown into the line. If the Germans try to outflank us, you must simply do your best."

"And see my battalion destroyed?" Chisholm had fumed.

"Do you think I like leading lambs to the slaughter?" Morgan had asked him.

"Then, with respect, sir, order the retreat."

Content

April 1940. The Nazi Blitzkrieg thunders across Norway as its people lay unprepared and helpless. In support of the Norwegian defences Allied forces from Britain and France stand defiant in the face of the German War Machine.

Beneath the weight of such a powerful and well coordinated enemy the Allied lines crumble and a desperate rearguard action is fought as they retreat north through the vast valleys

and mountain ranges. Forced through the natural bottlenecks the ground troops are easy pickings for the bombers and fighters of the German Luftwaffe.

Enter Sergeant Jack Tanner of the "Yorks Rangers". A veteran of the pre-war conflicts in India, Tanner leads a mixed squad of new recruits as they receive their first taste of battle on the defensive front line.

Out on the flank, isolated on a mountain top and constantly harassed by the enemy, Tanner's squad is confident of escaping from the advancing Germans and finding a way to rejoin the main British force before it retreats too far north. That is until they stumble across a small group of Norwegian officers on the run. With them is a mysterious civilian, Sandvold, who carries a secret that the officers have sworn to protect. For Tanner and his men, their problems have only just begun.

In the midst of an enormous battle for the conquest of Norway, the German High Command has put together a team of mountain troops to capture Sandvold alive. The hunt is on.

Impressions

James Holland is a well known and respected historian who is able to bring a wealth of credibility and realism to this fictional tale. His ability to research the facts and use them as a base on which to tell a story is to his credit and they provide an extra element to the drama and suspense whether you are a history buff or not.

The Odin Mission is the first in an ongoing series of novels that are focused around the character of Sergeant Jack Tanner and his exploits during the Second World War. The next instalments, that are already available, see Tanner and his men fight in Dunkirk, Crete, North Africa and Sicily.

There have been comparisons to the

"Sharpe" series by Bernard Cornwell and it's obvious to see why. Hot-headed heroes, spit-inducing villains, incompetent officers and so much fast-paced action that I honestly found the book hard to put down, I simply had to find out what happened next.

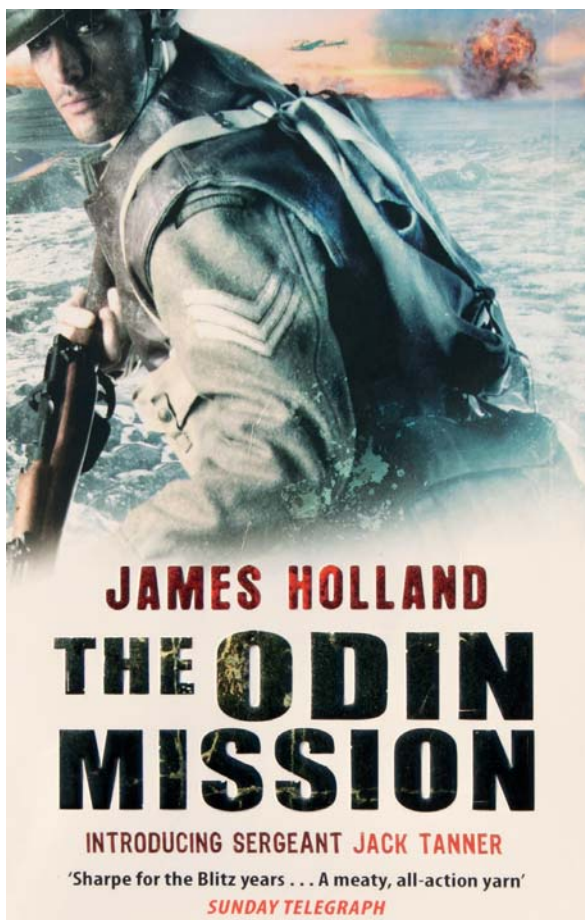
This isn't great literature or a classical read on the futility of war, it was never intended to be. This is a series of adventure novels akin to the Commando Comics I grew up on as a child. The violence has been ramped up with more toe-curling realism to suit an adult audience but the spirit of excitement remains in spades.

This is in no doubt accredited to the passion that the author has for the subject matter and historical background and his willingness to have some measured fun by pushing the boundaries and embracing clichés. In fact I enjoyed this first instalment so much that I ordered the rest of the series and I'm already four books in.

Proper page turning stuff!

'The flash of tracer round streaked across the yard and struck the wooden box. Immediately an explosion ripped the air, sheets of flame burst out and engulfed the largest stack of stores, followed in succession by a second, third and fourth explosion as the fireball engulfed the yard. The first half-dozen Germans were caught in the inferno and Tanner saw three more catch fire amid screams of shock and pain.'

"Run!" shouted Tanner.'





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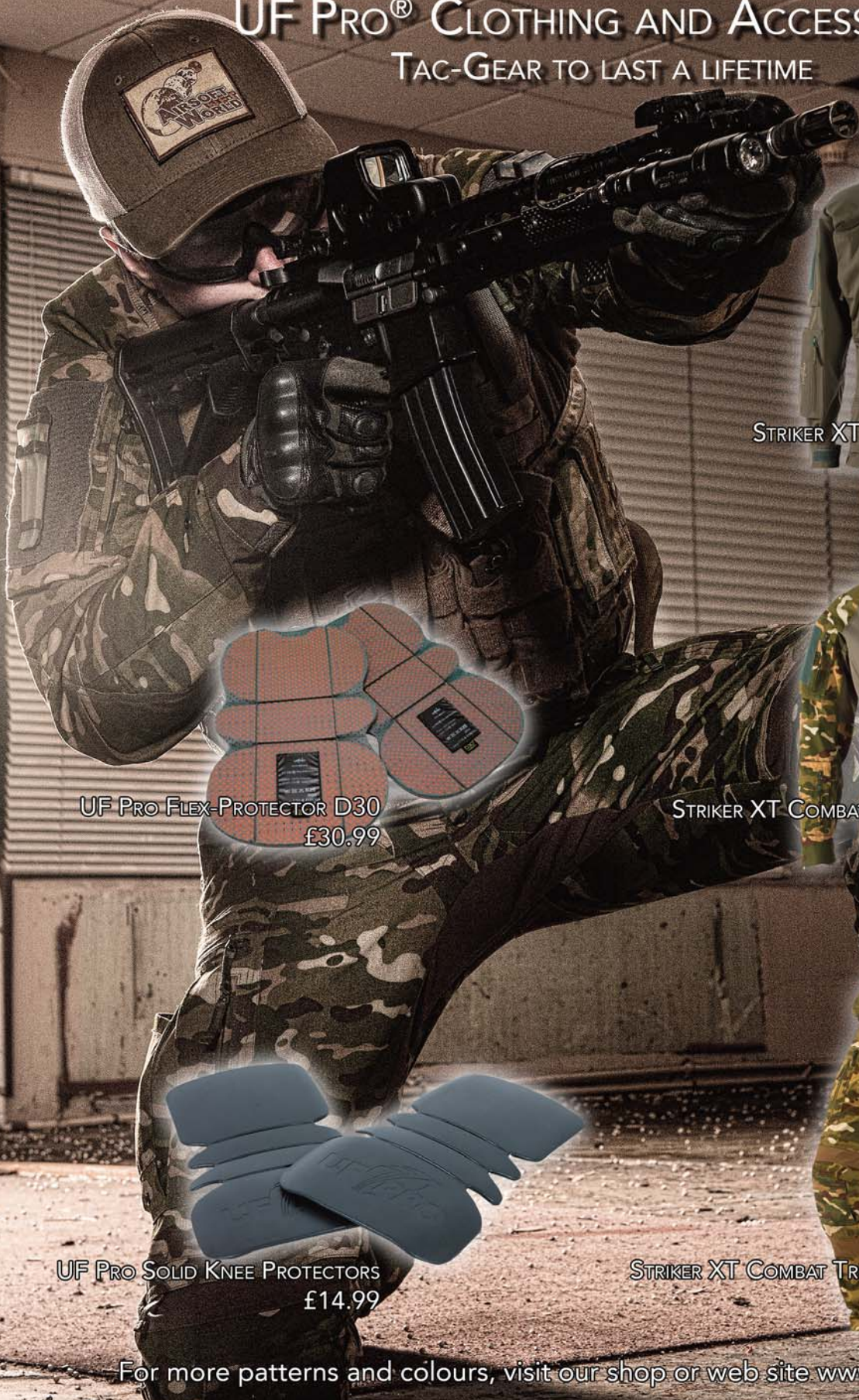
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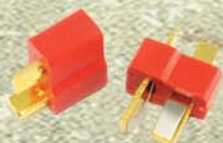


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